

DECISION.

VOL. III.

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DECISION.

A Tale.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF CORRECTION, &c.

Say, in this rapid tide of human ruin,
Is there no rock on which man's tossing thought
Can rest from terror, dare his fate survey,
And boldly think it something to be born?

YOUNG.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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[Harling, Mrs. Anne
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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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DECISION.

CHAPTER I.

ISABEL soon recovered to a sense of her bereaved state; looking wildly round, she met the tearful eyes of Mrs. Delville, whom no consideration could longer detain from her loved friend — “he is gone, Eliza,” groaned the young widow. Mrs. Delville replied with tears only, well knowing this was not the fit season for consolation; but to poor Isabel tears and consolations were nearly equal. She insisted on returning to the chamber of death, and when there, yielded to such overpowering expressions of grief and

despair, venting such dreadful reproaches on her “*hard fate*,” her “*cruel destiny*,” that the pious Eliza found it required all her fortitude, all her religion and love for her friend, to support her in a scene so dreadfully trying to every feeling. The night was far advanced, when, exhausted and worn out with the violence of her grief, Isabel sunk into a state of calm insensibility, and while thus, was again conveyed to another apartment.

The task which Colonel Delville had to perform below was not less difficult or trying than that of his kind Eliza: finding, from every enquiry, that Mr. Escott was indeed at the point of death, his unprincipled partner, Cresswell, who had since his illness received large remittances from various countries, refused to honour any bills presented, on pretence of uncertainty as to Mr. Escott, and collecting all he could in any way draw together, from every possible quarter, absconded the night preceding the unfortunate

Escott's death, and embarked in a vessel then under weigh for America.

The news was no sooner known than demands of every kind were sent to the distracted Isabel, and a distraint instantly placed on her furniture, horses, carriage, plate, and every thing she possessed. The house was crowded with creditors, men of business, and gossips of curiosity, whom no circumstances are painful enough to restrain.

Colonel Delville was well acquainted with business, and set himself to the settling of this with all the steadiness of his character, and the zeal of friendship; with considerable difficulty he prevented any discovery being made to Isabel, whose life her physicians declared hung on a thread that any fresh shock would probably snap for ever. She had now ceased to rave or weep, but lay on a couch the wan image of despair; pale as the wrappers in which she was enveloped; silent as a corpse, except when broken by a

long groan, which threatened to separate body and soul ; her large black eyes open, fixed, and glazed, and her finely rounded figure, that a Grecian sculptor might have imitated as his choicest model, shrunk, fallen, and listless ; the only sign of sense or motion she betrayed was with her languid hand, to put away every kind of nourishment, or wave for silence if any one attempted to speak to her.

Mrs. Delville, with unwearied kindness, watched over her ; gave directions for the management of her house and children, guarded her from surprise, and prepared silently for two events equally to be expected and dreaded — the ushering of a fatherless infant into the world, and the being turned out of the house by creditors, to whose feelings, as husbands and fathers, they owed their present residence and subsistence.

But all those cares were well nigh over-set by the violent, impetuous little

Clara, who, bursting into the room, exclaimed in a voice of rage, "Tell me, my own mamma, what do those ugly, vulgar men, mean, by daring to refuse me the carriage to go out in, now it rains? They say it is not my carriage, and that soon we shall not have a house, much less a carriage; do, pray, dear mamma, order them out of my sight, for Colonel Delville is so kind to them, and gives them all they want; I hate such vulgar people!"

This was the first time Isabel had seen either of the infants since their father's death—all appearance of mourning had likewise been kept from her sight; and now the angry child, followed by her maid, in their woe-clad habiliments, awakened all her agonised feelings; starting with frantic earnestness from the couch, she caught the little complainer in her arms, exclaiming, "Yes, my darling; the world may well use thee ill, when the fates have done their worst, and

robbed thee of thy unequalled father. But what does she mean," continued Isabel, to the affrighted servant; "let no one dare presume; — I am not yet dead."

At this moment Mrs. Delville re-entered the room, and happily succeeded in quelling a storm so suddenly and so violently raised.

Isabel again sunk into silence and torpidity, but would bear to hear Mrs. Delville talk and even read to her, who kindly and judiciously following up the impressions made by the penitence, tears, and broken exhortations of the dying Escott, strove to lead to a prospect beyond the transitory one which death closes on us, by talking of griefs, disappointments, and sudden overthrows; to prepare her, in some measure, for the dreadful tale that yet remained to be made known.

Eliza would urge resignation to the invincible decrees of divine and all-wise Providence, as the sure means of peace

and everlasting repose ; and sometimes lead her sad friend on to expect a re-union with those we love in life eternal.

But Isabel's deep groan, and " Ah ! Eliza ; this, this is visionary ; even your favourite Scriptures do not promise such a thing — do not attempt to deceive me with fancies ;" and the shudder which followed, made her extremely careful of venturing any thing not positively drawn from Holy Writ.

The children were now occasionally admitted to their wretched mother, though the sight and sound of the little innocents almost deprived her of reason.

It had been among the fond pleasures of Isabel and her husband to ornament their children with miniatures of their parents ; thus each wore a gold neck-chain, to which was suspended a finely finished small miniature likeness of each parent.

Cecilia came weeping to her mother, who, surprised at the unusual sight, ten-

derly kissed away the fast-falling tears, and enquired their cause; — with many sobs Cecilia complained that her nurse would not allow her to wear the chain and dear papa; “ And you know, mamma,” said the weeping girl, “ it is the only papa I have now: why then shall I not have it? Oh! I do so wish reason had left me when it did papa, that poor little Cicy might have slept with papa — I don’t love reason now; and nurse Huntur’s Kitty says, it is soul, not reason.”

Isabel could not reply; for the first time she felt shocked at hearing the word “ reason” so used.

Mrs. Delville read her feelings, and taking the little girl on her knee, strove to make her understand that her father was now in heaven; and that if she were a good obedient girl, she may one day hope to die and go to him — but that it was very wrong to wish it, because God, who gave her every thing, gave her life,

and would take it away when it was proper.

Cecilia heard with attention, and kissing the lips that taught her, artlessly wondered mamma or papa had never told her such a thing before ; but she would go and tell Clara, who had been talking of killing herself, because she did not love reason.

In reply to Isabel's sorrowful exclamation, as the child quitted the apartment, Mrs. Delville reminded her of the Almighty care promised to the fatherless and widow.

“ A father to the fatherless,” she replied with a bitter smile ; “ He had better shown that by sparing the one he robbed them of — one he never can replace.”

Eliza offered no reply, but preferred a silent petition, that this stubborn will might be broken by as little affliction as would save her soul. — That night she was taken ill, and before morning the son so anxiously desired was ushered into this

vale of tears just five weeks after his father's death.

There are some circumstances that language will not describe; none but the sad few who have felt this climax of human woe can fancy the depth of that grief, the desolation of that bereaved mother, who gives existence to an infant ardently desired by its beloved father, when that father no longer waits to receive it; can no more reward her pains by his tender joy — no more blesses his offspring — no more smiles on his wife. — When over this, and all that fond remembrance too faithfully paints, the cold silent grave has for ever closed! none else can suppose the agony of feelings attendant on the first sight of a son, born fatherless, deprived of his best friend, without having seen him — doomed never to experience the paternal embrace, the father's blessing on his first-born son; *they* only know what such unutterable griefs mean, and *know* they

cannot be described. It requires deep submission to the heavenly will, and close acquaintance with the divine precepts not to *feel* under such circumstances what Isabel, in the tone of fixed despair *uttered*, on seeing of her boy: — “ Ah ! unhappy one, to what purpose wert thou born ? he, to whom thy life was dear, is gone ; ah ! come not here to add thy weight of bitterness to griefs already too heavy to be borne ; take him away, Eliza, I can see him no more.”

“ My dear Isabel,” returned the kind Eliza, “ do not be cruel to your poor boy ; he has not sinned against you, and may, perhaps, prove a rich reward to your care.”

“ True,” replied Isabel, “ he has not sinned ; then why is he punished ? this is neither justice nor mercy ; and this is the God you bid me love, and call a husband, and father ; oh ! cruel, cruel, in both characters.”

Day followed day, and Isabel, who

had often talked of lying down and dying whenever life became a burthen, found that under all her load she could not do so ; on the contrary, her strength began to return with every prospect of life, and probable health ; but the gloom and horror of her mind continued to encrease; she hated herself for not dying, and considered returning life but as a lengthened woe. Giving way to every expression of despair, she would look wildly round, and ask by what right she was made to drag a lengthened chain of miseries unsupportable, and declare she thought it the privilege of every creature to end life when found no longer bearable.

At another time she would weep rivers of tears, talk of repentance, submission, and forgiveness ; but still maintained she could never again enjoy life, or make any exertion for her children ; no, nor ever cease to think herself hardly, cruelly dealt by.

“ You have often, dear Isabel,” replied Colonel Delville, to such a declaration, “ expressed for your children a love almost surpassing that of parental ; now is your opportunity of proving it, by, for their sakes, rising above your situation, making exertions you have never thought possible ; but, believe me, the human mind, supported by a firm reliance on Omnipotence, can sustain much more than you have done, — much more than you have yet to encounter.”

“ I can have nothing more to sustain,” mournfully replied Isabel ; “ fate has done her worst, all else is reckless ; some quiet corner of the globe may now shelter my widowed head ; to all, and every thing, I am now indifferent.”

“ You know not what you have to bear, dear Isabel ; for instance, suppose your income reduced by villainy, and distress hovering over you in various shapes, that money, which you have not, might relieve.”

“Think not that would affect me,” replied Isabel, bitterly; “oh! know the soul you traduce; give me my Escott, and rob me of all else — I would smile on your puny efforts in derision.”

During this conversation Mrs. Delville had been beckoned from the room, and now returned with a countenance so full of trouble, that Isabel hastily demanded what new evil had happened.

“Nothing very new, I suspect,” said the Colonel.

“Indeed, quite new, and overwhelming,” replied Eliza, “but one that you, my poor Isabel, must know, and farther concealment would be criminal.”

“Oh!” exclaimed Isabel, “talk not of concealment, I can now hear any thing unmoved; I am now firm as adamant, a scathed oak, too deeply rooted to be shaken by the storm; another lightning blast may shiver, but even that could not uproot it.”

“You know, my dear,” rejoined Mrs.

Delville, “that your three girls have been complaining these two days, they are to-day much worse; Eliza has, for some hours, been delirious; and Dr. Liars declares them all to be in high fevers — for my poor little namesake, he appears to entertain but very little hope; indeed, this is a heavy addition to our trials; but he who afflicts can support.”

Isabel spoke not, wept not; but with wide distended eyes, deathly cheeks, tightly closed teeth, and clenched hand, sat the mute object of ghastly despair; until Colonel Delville, alarmed at her senseless appearance, laid his hand on her shoulder, exclaiming — “Isabel, for God’s sake arouse yourself; any thing, every thing, that I can do, shall be done for you; but you must not yield in this way to a morbid indulgence of grief.”

Isabel was aroused; but, alas! it was the arousing of madness — “a morbid indulgence,” repeated she, “yes, that sounds well from you, from you who

know grief but by name; and that vented, your pathetic lamentations and melancholy face from country to country, a dozen years, deploring an imaginary loss that time convinces all the world was not irreparable; morbid indulgence! if you are sick of the house of woe, go, go, seek your own smiling home, but dare not insult her, who, sunk, fallen, and broken-hearted, is infinitely your superior."

Colonel Delville was too truly a Christian to resent this ungrateful effusion: but he began to tremble for her intellects, and regret that any consideration had induced him to withhold her real situation so long from her, especially as it every hour became more difficult; fresh demands were poured in, and the Calcutta creditors were clamorous and insolent.

The whole establishment was maintained chiefly at the Colonel's expense, which, as he had been a very considerable

loser by the failure, he felt an injustice to himself and children; yet, at present, to remove either mother or children, or abridge their comforts, was a species of murder he could not commit.

No argument or persuasion could keep Isabel from her children. Scarcely able to stand, and incapable of walking half-way across the room, without assistance, she insisted on becoming their constant attendant; — to reason with her, was to oppose a hurricane, — like that she bore all before her, and like that was fearfully irresistible; fast as her trembling limbs would carry her, the wretched Isabel hurried through the long suite of rooms; — at one door the compassionate nurse hesitated, and would have turned another way.

“No, no,” said Isabel, in a hollow voice; “go on, I know, and can bear even that now.”

On entering the room, which had not been touched since Mr. Escott’s death, she gazed, with a wild unsettled eye,

around; then hastily throwing herself on the bed, yielded to a convulsive burst of anguish, that shook her soul's frail tenement to dissolution; then rising with a desperate sort of effort, she rushed into the children's apartment, where, in all the delirium of raving fever, Clara screamed, stormed, and scolded; while the little Eliza, perfectly insensible, lay burning and panting on her nurse's lap.

Cecilia, only better in retaining her senses, implored her dear mamma to tell her if she might go to heaven to papa.

From this scene of complicated misery Isabel sternly refused to move; a couch was placed for her at one end of the apartment, and there, strange to say, Isabel's mind began to recover its powers; and there, for the first time, she commenced the task of reading her own heart, and thus its deceitfulness began to appear; there, for the first time, Isabel discovered her own *insufficiency*; but it was not the rapid work of a day or week

— oh no ; such an edifice of pride and self, though without foundation, bore many shocks before it was finally overthrown, and great and terrible was every shock.

Two days after Isabel was established in her apparently dying children's apartment, Colonel Delville was suddenly summoned from Madras ; and a day or two after, the sudden illness of two of her children recalled Mrs Delville to her long deserted home, and left Isabel a prey to agony unspeakable.

Left to herself, all the horrors of her situation appeared to gain a three-fold force, no kind hand longer warded off every vexation or contradiction, in every face was visible an uncertain sort of watchfulness — a hesitation in every reply ; the result of circumstances yet unknown to Isabel, and that heightened her distraction to madness.

Short as was Colonel Delville's time, previous to his departure, that kind friend

had committed Isabel's affairs into the hands of his own man of business, with injunctions that every thing she required should, during the children's illness, be supplied at his sole expense: he charged the butler also, a man who had lived with them from their coming there, to be careful in keeping his mistress guarded from surprise or insult; but here even the Colonel showed how little he knew the unregenerate heart — Isabel and her husband were respected and almost loved by their numerous domestics; while the family of the Honourable George Escott was the most luxurious in the country, and while every servant drew his or her own respectability and fashion from the high consideration bestowed on their employers; but as religion was not esteemed by the superiors of the family, there was no such thing in any part of the household, and with their wealth, fell, in the opinion of the servants, their title to respect or attention.

Mr. Escott had now been dead near three months, and all that time it had been known to her numerous household, many of whom Colonel Delville had dismissed, that her circumstances were reduced to comparative poverty; respect ceasing, pity soon grew a sickening feeling, and all began to cast an eye around on the best way of securing something for themselves.

Thus the Abigail, who had succeeded Maxwell, the girl Isabel brought out with her, thought her mistress could never want so many ornaments and fine dresses now she was a widow and poor, therefore liberally supplied herself with the superabundant finery; the nurses, acting on the same principle, appropriated a large portion of the children's ornaments and rich laces to their own particular use; the housekeeper and butler, who were on the point of marriage, thought it right to supply themselves with plate, linen, wares, &c. &c. to as great an

amount as possible, sagely observing, that by so doing they did themselves a service, and nobody any harm, for no part of it would be left to Mrs. Escott; therefore they did neither her nor her children any injury.

The same sentiment actuated every individual, until the alarmed creditors began to suspect a short time longer would leave them nothing to take possession of.

“ I must,” said one of them, “ see Mrs. Escott.”

“ Very well, Sir,” replied the butler, “ my lady sees other people, and there can be no objection to her seeing you, if you will walk this way; I know she is alone.”

So saying he threw open the folding door of Isabel’s apartment, and, announcing Mr. Williams, withdrew.

There was in Isabel’s majestic, though shadowy figure, the mournful expression of her beautiful eyes, the settled melan-

choly of her perfect features, and the solemnity of her dress and manners, a grandeur of woe that disarmed and awed the angry creditor ; the contrast of what she now was and what he had last seen her, of the quiet grief that surrounded her, and the careless noise of her domestics, was so striking, so impressive, that the trembling Mr. Williams, who though a vulgar, was not a hard-hearted man, forgot all the expostulation he came to make ; and, had it been possible, would have crept away concealed by his own insignificance, but it was not possible : Isabel did not speak, but, by her waiting manner, demanded an explanation of this extraordinary intrusion.

“ I beg your pardon, lady,” stammered he at last, “ I should not have thought of taking this liberty, if Mr. Norton had not said, my lady, that you saw other people. Still Isabel replied not, and her visitor, gaining courage, proceeded :

“ To be sure, my lady, it is a hard thing

to lose so much good money, and see in what a shocking way every thing is going on below; I do not wish to be hard, ma'am, so I told Colonel Delville, that if you would please, ma'am, to settle it in some way or other, I should be very glad, my lady."

"What do you mean, sir?" demanded Isabel; — the man stared, and she added, "I really do not understand you."

"Oh, as to that ma'am," replied he, with a little more confidence, "it is easy enough to understand me; I was among the first of the creditors, and it was I, ma'am, that laid the restraint; not that I see, ma'am, that it was much good, and 'tis now three months and more, and something must be done to settle it."

At this moment the little Eliza faintly murmured, "quiet, dear mamma," and Isabel flying towards her, motioned the man to quit the room, with a dignity he dared not dispute; but unwilling to retire without making something of his

interview, he said, "but, my lady, when will you let me know about settling?"

I know nothing about what you are talking," she replied; "but you had better see Mr. Creswell, or some of the clerks."

The man stared in surprise, repeating, "see Mr. Creswell, or clerks, what do *you* mean now, ma'am?"

"Send him away dearest mamma," murmured the sick girl.

"When shall I call again, ma'am?" said the creditor.

"Never!" wildly replied Isabel, "unless you would drive me mad, and murder my child; see how you agitate her, away! away! nor dare repeat this intrusion."

Awed by her manner, Mr. Williams no longer attempted reply; but hastily retiring, wondered what frightened him so much, when he intended to have frightened her, by telling her a piece of his mind.

Her children again soothed to sleep, and perfect quietness reigning around, Isabel began to revolve in her mind the strangeness of her morning visitor's words and actions, and to wonder how such a person could have gained access to her. It appeared there were some circumstances which required investigation, what they were, she knew not; but after much consideration, and inward battling, with an effort that she would have dignified with the appellation of heroism, Isabel determined to conquer her repugnance to society, so far as to see Creswell, and enquire; and without giving herself time to alter so magnanimous a resolve, instantly wrote a card expressive of her desire; and summoned her own page, to dispatch it immediately: the lad was a Hindoo, who could not read, and spoke but little English; the extreme beauty, and elegance, of himself and brother, were their recommendation to the favour and protection of Isabel, who, satisfied with that, had

taken no kind of pains to instruct or improve them ; thus neglecting to attach them, by the only link their Mahometan faith left in her power, wherewith to bind them to her interest. The boy presented his elegant ivory basket, to receive the offered billet, and again silently withdrew. The domestic, whose place it was to receive orders from the page, was something better informed, and the question, What should be done with the note ? employed the whole household, until it was consigned to forgetfulness, behind the porter's chair.

CHAP. II.

“DON’T tell me,” said the bustling Mr. Harris, “if she don’t know any thing about it, ’tis time she should. I wonder if I was to cheat every body, and then die, who would maintain my wife and children? There was a ship came in last week, but I don’t hear of a penny that’s to be paid from her, though she took out some good hundreds of my money. Mr. Adams, the lawyer, says we must all wait till Colonel Delville comes back, and may be, that may never happen; however, I’ll see madam; many a fine thing has she carried away from my store, and if I can’t have the money, I will the goods: so there, you may say I’m coming, or not, just as you choose, Mr. Norton, for I’ll go to your mistress.”

“ Oh, I’ll announce you, sir,” replied Norton, and did so accordingly. Harris’s heart and face were equally made of brass : neither the grief, dignity, nor silence of Isabel affected him ; shutting the door, he walked toward the ottoman on which Isabel was reclining, and without apology, began with “ Well, ma’am, I just came to know if you think of paying my bill ; ’tis a pretty long one for you and the misses, besides all that went out in the Fitzallen, and which I don’t hear a word about paying, though she was paid off last week.”

“ Why do you intrude on me with these matters ?” calmly replied Isabel ; “ my steward will settle my private account, the other you will of course take to Mr. Creswell.”

“ Lord, ma’am, what do you talk like that for ? your steward, and Mr. Creswell, a precious pair of rascals ; let either of them show their faces in Madras or Calcutta, either if they will, I wouldn’t

desire better sport, than to see them swinging; for upon my life, ma'am, after all, I do pity you and your babies, as one may call them; though people should not live beyond what they can afford, as you have."

Isabel listened in horror; an indistinct idea of new miseries gleamed over her, but what, she could form no idea of. At last as the man stopped, she gasped "What can you mean? explain yourself for mercy's sake."

"As to that," replied Harris; "it is easy enough to explain myself, and, as I say, you ought to have been told it all before now; but you know, ma'am, the very day poor Mr. Escott died, who was, God rest him, the best gentleman ever I see, since I left old England, and that's many a year ago; well, ma'am, that very day Mr. Creswell, he set off for America people do say, with a great great deal of money; and if he did not give it to you, ma'am, so he did, for it is well known he

received many thousands that week, belonging to the concern, and never paid a farthing ; well, you know, just directly, your steward set off, Colonel Delville said, with a great deal of money and property , so then, ma'am, all the creditors met, and Colonel Delville, and Mr. Adams the lawyer, and every body agreed to wait till you was a little better, then all the misses got ill, and we said we'd wait a bit longer, as a person was put here to take care of the property ; but you see ma'am, we are got tired of waiting. Colonel Delville, he is away again, and nobody knows when he will return again, if ever ; and then the Fitzallen coming in, and nobody hearing a word about any money, you see, ma'am, something must be done.

He might have talked on to his heart's content, Isabel could not interrupt him ; she thought the last blow was given her broken heart, and here began the work of prayer. She prayed earnestly her

senses might be spared a few days longer. Alas! it was a sinful prayer, for the thought was, that after that time, she would welcome madness as a friend, for the world presented no spot of ground on which her foot could rest in peace. Finding she did not reply, Harris continued:

“ So you see, ma’am, if you please, I should choose to be paid my money at once; or I have no objection to take back the things, at half, or quarter price; for what, as I say, do people stay in this shocking country for, if not to make something for themselves, that they may go back again in comfort, and this is a bad way of making.”

“ I cannot,” replied Isabel, “ talk to you now; but I will see Mr. Adams, and consult with him, what is to be done.”

“ Very well, madam, and in the mean time, if you would keep a sharper look out on your servants, that they don’t make such a market; why it would be

better for you, and us too; and I'll see you again in a day or two."

So saying, Mr. Harris took his leave, and Isabel remained a prey to the most racking torments; with unsteady, but agonised step, she paced the sumptuous apartment, where the splendid furniture appeared to mock her distress, and threatened poverty. While thus distracted, nurse Hunter, who Mrs. Delville had insisted on staying with Isabel, entered the room, and recalled in an instant, the mother's recollection.

"How are my darlings, nurse?"

"The doctor is just gone, madam, and says, that if they are kept quite quiet, and given plenty of air, and nourishing things, they may do very well again, but all depends on that; so I have been speaking about the carriage, madam, if they will let us have one to-morrow, or else, madam, I thought of asking Mrs. Delville; I am sure every thing she has, you may have. You know, madam, I

suppose, her dear little boy, master Henry, died to day ; poor fellow, he has been a great sufferer."

" Happy boy !" sighed Isabel ; " this is a suffering life—this—and what is the next? Ah, my beloved, why art thou not here, to answer that question, thou who now couldst answer it."

" The dear gentleman did answer it, madam, many times," said nurse. " Often, madam, he told us, there was an eternity of bliss ; and many were the prayers, he offered for his own soul, and for yours, and for his children. Ah ! madam, remember how he directed you to God for support, and truth to say, you have much need of it."

In proof of nurse's assertion, the door was at this moment burst open, by two ruffian looking fellows. " I don't care," said one, " for a dozen fine ladies, I'll do my duty. Ma'am, you are my prisoner ; a carriage to take children in a fever out in, indeed ; pay for it first if

you please ; not a penny paid of that, or any thing else, so now here I stay ; that's all."

"What does all this mean?" demanded Isabel; "Leave me, I command! who dares enter this room, without permission; leave me, I repeat."

"Yes, yes," grinned one of them, as soon as ever we get what we be come for, we'll go; but as to permission, why that we brought with us from Calcutta, and shall keep, I fancy."

Isabel felt her brain in a whirl, "Where!" exclaimed she, "will it all end; shall I with my sick children, be turned into the street; or am I to live in a den of robbers."

The men caught the last words, and insolently bid her look at home for robbers; they were plain honest men, that left it to fine ladies and gentlemen, to become robbers.

At this moment, the cries of her children, reached Isabel's ears; recollecting

the order for quiet, she turned on the men, with the action and voice of madness, exclaiming loudly, “ Begone, I say ! begone ! would you murder my children, wretches ? this moment begone ! ” So saying, she hastily moved toward the door, to retire.

“ Fair and softly, lady,” said the tormentors ; “ you are our prisoner, and must stay here, just now.”

Words would faintly describe the horror of despair that seized the wretched Isabel, in this complication of miseries. Mrs. Hunter, who every moment expected to see her expire, under the torture of her mind, whispered the men a few moments, and obtained from them, what indeed they had no right to withhold, that she should retire unmolested ; then taking her by the arm, led her from the room. In passing that of her children, Isabel turned toward them for an instant, then bursting into a wild laugh, exclaimed, “ yes, die, die all of you ; it

was what your adored father did,—do the same, it is the only way to escape from this storm ; I must abide its pitiless pelting,—but die, die, my darlings.” Nurse gently drew her forward to her own room, where, throwing herself on the bed, Isabel wept without controul. This was what the kind nurse had hoped, who instantly dispatched a note to Mrs. Delville, stating what had occurred ; and another to Mr. Adams, entreating his presence immediately. Having done this, and once more looked on the now sleeping infants, Mrs. Hunter glided into a corner of Isabel’s room, and quietly betook herself to her knees, seeking consolation, and direction, from the fountain of all goodness. This duty performed, she arose, and opening a small pocket bible, read with deep attention, mingled with many tears ; but they were so evidently, not the tears of remorse or grief, that Isabel, who had been an unsuspected observer,

could no longer restrain herself, from asking their cause.

“ I seldom,” returned nurse, “ can read without tears, the promises here made to sinners.”

“ But why, nurse, should the promises make you weep ?”

Because, madam, I cannot help reflecting how much men love darkness, rather than light ; and how ungratefully and perversely they reject the offered mercy and blessings of God : as if any thing in this world, could compensatē, for the loss of life everlasting, or rather of happiness everlasting ; for live we shall, in bliss or woe, eternally.”

“ I believe it, nurse ; but the securing of happiness, appears to me utterly impossible.”

“ I thought so too once, my dear madam, but I know better now ; and so will you one day.”

“ I believe never, nurse ; my doom, in time, and in eternity, is misery.”

“ Oh, say not so, my dear madam ; however severe your trials may be, He who imposes, will enable you to bear them, if you humbly ask it ; the founder of our religion, suffered more than his followers can ; should not this encourage you, madam ?”

“ Not at all, nurse, for these two reasons ; the Saviour was an innocent sufferer, who died to redeem his people ; therefore his sufferings cannot be compared with mine ; again, you say, ask humbly ;—I have no humility. I feel my sorrows as cruel punishments ; I am forced to acknowledge, that all my life has been a continuance of wilful error and offence, against the Judge of all ; I have rejected his mercy, and spurned his laws ; for all this, he is now pursuing me, with the violence of his indignation ; it may be justice, but it is not mercy. I am torn, distracted, convinced, wretched, but *not humbled*.”

“ Alas ! dear madam, do not say,

‘with the violence of his indignation,’ there is indeed much mercy, it may be much worse.”

“ I do not know in what way,” replied Isabel bitterly, as the door opened, and her faithful friend Eliza once more held her in her arms.

“ My poor dear Isabel,” sobbed the affectionate Eliza, “ why did you not send for me before ? I would have spared you this rough disclosure of a trying situation. Surely you could not doubt my readiness to come to you at all, and every time.”

“ Oh !” groaned Isabel, “ I now feel it may indeed be worse. I did not doubt you, my only friend ; but I have already drawn too largely on your kindness, and now I am beyond the reach of cure. Why did you leave your family to come to this scene of misery ? I cannot die, but, perhaps, my infants may ; they are free from actual guilt, and may escape punishment, and I should rejoice to see

them in their coffins. Alas ! perhaps they would not even get coffins now ; well, no matter, they would have escaped this horrible judgment that is heavier than I can bear.”

Mrs. Delville did not attempt to reason with or condemn this soreness of a wounded conscience, but strove to soothe and console ; it was gaining much to be allowed free application of Scripture truths, and Mrs. Delville knew how judiciously to apply them ; her own heart was just now the seat of deeply felt grief, and her words came with double force when Isabel reflected on the one child but yet just dead, and the other a feeble, languid sufferer ; both the fatal price of unequalled friendship, which had carried the baneful fever from one family to the other.

“ Even in this,” said Isabel, “ is the avenging hand visible ; your children have the prospect of every happiness in this life, and a proper preparation for

another ; yet one is taken, and the other probably will be ; mine, who have nothing before them but endless miseries, for aught I know, here and hereafter, are, and possibly will be, spared ; as if in constant aggravation of my woe, I should be a useless witness of their wants and miseries.”

“ This, dearest Isabel, is a gloomy misanthropic statement, and, believe me, not a just one ; it appears to me more reasonable to suppose, that my child is removed from the evil to come, and the other still suffers as a rod of correction to me ; perhaps I have made that boy too much an idol ; certain it is the chastisement was necessary, and is just. I have still four left, and may have more ; hence the bereavement, though severe, is not so great as it would have been to you, whose children are now your all, and who, from them, may with confidence expect happiness, if properly trained ! The Almighty, I would fain hope, sees

that your chastisement is sufficient ; if so, he will say ‘ it is enough !’ certain it is, he has mingled mercy in your cup, by sparing these darling pledges of that wedded bliss you once called perfect !”

Reply was prevented by the page advancing to say Mr. Adams was in the outer room.

“ I will see him,” replied Isabel ;
“ yet,” continued she, shuddering,
“ these horrid men.”

“ Are not there,” said Mrs. Delville ;
“ you will see no more of them.”

Isabel pressed her hand and passed on.

Mr. Adams was a plain man of business, extremely sorry Mrs. Escott’s affairs bore such an unpromising appearance, and still more so, that she should have been so agitated by the importunities of a few troublesome persons ; from conversation, it appeared that he held an account of debts on both sides, and

had drawn up a fair statement, which he produced, for Isabel's inspection.

"But, Madam," continued he, hesitating, "there is some alteration to be made; since the arrival of the Fitzallen, her accounts are — are —"

"Are what?" demanded Isabel, raising her eyes from figures she could not comprehend and scarcely read.

"Are but indifferent, Madam."

"But indifferent? — what mere machines men of business are; — tell me, Sir, are they maddening? — do they reduce me to poverty?"

Mr. Adams was a husband and a father, and these feelings made him still hesitate, though a little offended by his fair friend's haughty manner.

"They are certainly unfavourable, Madam; but, I hope —"

"Hope nothing, Sir; but, for God's sake, tell me the plain facts, unless you would see me frantic before your eyes."

“ Say all, Mr. Adams,” said Mrs. Delville, “ my friend will support any certainty better than suspense ; and every thing must now become known.”

It appeared from Mr. Adams’s relation that the Fitzallen had brought accounts of the failure of the two principal agents in Britain ; that her cargo had all been sold, and that what she brought home would scarcely pay expenses ; beside many other unpleasant details, Mr. Adams had now to announce that the whole property to be collected, in the most favourable view of things, would not more than pay the private debts, leaving the commercial ones to be recovered from the delinquent Creswell ; it was his advice, that such a composition should be offered as would leave some slender provision for the widow and orphans.

But here Isabel was immovable — as far as the effects would go every penny should be paid. She may be poor, may be miserable, but would not be dishonest,

or seek to establish her own ease on the ruin of honest industry.

Opposition but rendered her violent: she would be obeyed; all should be immediately sold, and she would retire to the straw-roofed hut of some poor Hindoo, of which many were untenanted.

“ I know,” said she, “ I have sinned against the majesty of Heaven in not deprecating its wrath and submitting to its stern decrees with obedience, and I am now suffering the punishment of pride and rebellion: but I will not affect a humility, I do not feel, by begging a poor assistance from the hard hand of griping covetousness, or increase the wrath of God by adding to my sins deceit or dishonesty — take all you can claim, and leave me to the rigour of my fate.”

Finding nothing more could be done, Mr. Adams took his leave, promising to proceed with the sale next day.

It is impossible to conceive a night of

more extreme wretchedness than that passed by the unhappy Isabel after her kind friend had left her, to return for a few hours to her suffering child. Convinced, thoroughly convinced, by the circumstances attending her husband's death and the attention she had since given to eternal things of the truth of the Scripture and the divinity of revelation, she stood appalled and dismayed at her long and stubborn infidelity. All the horrors of an accusing conscience added their dreadful weight to the overwhelming tide of troubles that flowed in on every side, and placed in frightful array before her mind's eye all the evils threatened to the disobedient and proud.

This life appeared a long line of misery — poverty, sickness, and every kind of distress: and the life to come flamed in unutterable horrors, endless, boundless, and never dying — “And such,” she would exclaim, “is the fate to which I am reserved, and to which I have in-

roduced my wretched little ones! Unhappy children! and your blind mother rejoiced when you were born! She should have wept blood, or followed the example of the poor natives, and committed you to the care of the swelling Ganges.”

Her dim eye rested on the sleeping boy, and, for an instant, the idea fired her brain. She would throw him into the sacred water, and thus rescue one of them from destruction:—it was but momentary; returning to a sense of her wandering she wept the cruel thought in bitter agony.

“ Thus,” said she, “ I add crime to crime, my every rising thought is sinful; destroy thee my poor babe! ah! no, live! that I may, without ceasing, warn thee against infidelity and sceptic philosophy — that I may repeat to thee, with every dragging breath, there is an avenging God — he will be served, or he will crush thee to atoms, grind thee to powder, and reserve thy senses to feel every thun-

dering blow ! Such is my own state ; it is punishment indeed, and will never, never end ! Oh ! there is the ‘ worm that dieth not, the fire that is not quenched.’ ”

In conflicts such as this the hours wore away, and another day of sorrow arose on the heart-struck widow : not once had sleep visited her aching eye-balls, or steeped in forgetfulness her distracted senses ; but with a composure, the effect of despair alone, she gave orders that all who came on business should be admitted, and then resumed her maternal duties among the slowly recovering girls.

At an early hour Mrs. Delville’s carriage arrived to take them out, and Isabel’s heart received another and a heavy blow. Accustomed all her life to indulgence and luxury, she had sometimes talked in excellent language of poverty or overthrown prospects — of people submitting to a change of circum-

stances, without suffering it to disturb their tranquillity — of bearing misfortune with fortitude, &c. : but in this, as in other things, Isabel found her theory and practice wonderfully opposed. She could talk of sufferings at a distance, but to bear them when present required something more than fortitude ; and Isabel's experience was not singular : it will generally be found that those persons who talk the most profoundly of the vicissitudes of human life have experienced the fewest.

Such persons would condemn the shudder that shook Isabel's frame at hearing Mrs. Delville's carriage announced ; and say much of the gratitude she ought to have felt that such a kind and liberal friend was yet preserved to her. But those who have *known* the dire reverses of fortune, will *feel* that the severest trial is sometimes the one least understood by the multitude, because its

outward aspect is not terrific, — like an iron entering into the soul, it is sharp, cutting, and secret.

The day was full of difficulties and mortifications: the trials of poor Isabel resembled those waves which, arising at a distance, come falling over each other towards the shore, each, by quick succession, destroying its foaming forerunner, and each one apparently heavier than the last.

“ I wonder,” said Isabel, at the close of this tumultuous day, “ how long one could bear this ‘ rocking of the battlements’ around one’s crazed brain, without absolute madness.”

“ It is impossible to say what the human frame will sustain,” replied Mrs. Delville, “ and still less what the mind can support; but I flatter myself your trials, my dear Isabel, will not be very long continued: they are violent, and you will, for the present, suffer much; but

all shall eventually work together for your good, and, I think, at no very distant period.”

“ I am not insensible to your care or kindness, Eliza ; nor am I forgetful, that in this fatal overthrow, you too are a considerable sufferer. It would be folly in me to say I lament this, you know I deplore it. Nor am I insensible to the beauty or the power of that religion, which, at a moment when your son is carrying to his silent grave, and your daughter asking every attentive care at your hands, chains you to the miserable house of your unhappy friend, gives you patience with my complaints, and presence of mind to answer all the unfeeling wretches who have this day tormented us : yet I cannot give credit to all you advance, or believe that you even think any good can possibly arise from the evils with which I am pursued.”

“ If I did not think it, Isabel, I would

not advance it ; but I consider that some good has already arisen from it — you no longer deny a superintending Providence, an eternity of rewards and punishments ; the truths of Christianity, or the power and advocacy of a Saviour. True, your views are clouded, but they will assuredly brighten ; and if they bring you to the foot of the cross, enable your strong mind to decide absolutely in favour of the humble Christian profession — all those will then appear light afflictions working for you an eternal weight of glory. Now acknowledge that good may arise from your present misfortunes.”

“ The very ground-work of this, Eliza, must be humility.”

“ It certainly must.”

“ And love for the Supreme Being is an essential to religion, is it not ?”

“ It is rather the result of religion than an essential to it ; but one will invariably produce the other.”

“ Then, Eliza, am I without either

the foundation or the result; I have neither love nor humility."

"But you may have both, Isabel."

"In what way?"

"Ask, and ye shall receive."

"No, I cannot ask; that requires humility. I have not enough to bend before my severe, inexorable judge! I must submit; but I will not pretend to sue the hand that afflicts."

A few days brought Isabel's affairs to a close; a purchaser had come forward, offering to take the house and furniture, plate, carriages, &c. &c. at a fair price, which Mr. Adams pronounced to be a most uncommonly fortunate circumstance, as by it a considerable expense and trouble would be saved.

"And when," asked Isabel, "am I to be so *fortunate* as to be turned into the streets?"

"Pray do not talk so, madam; some smaller house can easily be found: but the gentleman bid me say, madam,

that he should feel honoured by your staying here as long as you find it necessary or agreeable.”

“ Pray present my compliments to your client, and say I desire he will name his own time, and the house shall be vacant for him. And you, Mr. Adams, will have the goodness to engage for me one of those Hindoo huts I have frequently seen vacant.”

The lawyer stared aghast — a Hindoo cottage for the woman who had for years held the first European rank in Asia! not yielding even to the governor's haughty lady, in style, pomp, and adulation; and who now issued her orders from a low splendid ottoman, on which her recumbent fragile form rested for more than fancied support, with the melancholy but dignified authority of an imperial princess.

“ You are surprised, Mr. Adams,” continued Isabel, seeing he did not move or speak, “ but so it must be if this

mansion is sold ; and a hut suits my fallen fortunes better — to that hut let me remove immediately. I can be but wretched, and it matters not where. Now, sir, leave me, I would be alone.”

Like a wandering spirit Isabel roved from room to room through the sad and sleepless night. Each room, each article of furniture, recalled some fond remembrance, traced some tender attachment.

“And have I no foot of ground,” exclaimed she, “whereon to rest? No refuge from this wreck of happiness, fortune, and hope? Must the storm still beat on my unsheltered head? Ah! Isabel! truly thy strength is weakness; thou art fallen, fallen, fallen lower than the angels who first taught man disobedience; and yet I cannot feel humble, contrite, or submissive.”

She had just sent away her untasted breakfast, and was striving to amuse the almost convalescent Clara, whose stubborn self-will and violent spirit had lately

brought on convulsive attacks, from which the most painful consequences were to be apprehended, when the door suddenly opened, and Lord Tredegare was announced.

Isabel sat silent from inability to speak, and Lord Tredegare advancing apologised for intruding, by saying he had some proposals to make that no one could be entrusted with.

He then proceeded to play with and amuse the beautiful little invalid; enquired for the others; and succeeded so well in interesting his languid auditress, that Isabel condemned herself for the cool, ungenerous reception she had given such a considerate friend.

“ We are all going away,” said Clara, “ will you not be sorry ?”

“ So very sorry, my beautiful Clara, that I must strive to prevent it.”

“ You cannot, indeed; mamma and all go; we are away on the sea to Ireland: do you know where it is?”

His lordship satisfied the child, and contrived to engage her attention on the other side of the room; then turning to Isabel, hoped the East was not to lose its brightest constellation, by her quitting it.

“ Under my present circumstances, Lord Tredegare,” said Isabel, “ such language becomes all but an insult. I would willingly suppose you do not mean to insult me. This house and furniture are sold: Madras has lost its charms for me; and it is my intention to return immediately to Europe with my children.”

“ Did not Adams tell you, dear Mrs. Escott, that the purchaser of the house wished you to consider it as your own?”

“ He said something of the kind, but they were of course mere words of compliment: he purchased to make it his own, and I sell to be free from an incumbrance.”

“ Nay, dearest Isabel,” returned his lordship, “ your reasons are too well

known to admit of doubt: now hear mine, for I am the happy purchaser. Behold at your feet, adored Isabel," continued he, throwing himself at her feet, "the man, who for years has lived and drawn his existence from the distant hope of one day possessing you."

Here followed a long and burning description of love, torture, hope, delay, and present gratification.

Isabel sat almost turned to stone, yet not dreaming of any thing being offered *her* dishonourable; but she was soon undeceived.

"Presumptuous," gasped she, "how dare you —"

"Nay, beloved and beautiful Isabel, be not offended; stay here: the house, the master, my fortune, heart, soul, life, are yours. You, I know, are above prejudice; enjoy then, dear, enlightened Isabel, a life of pleasure: be mine! confined by no straight rules, no ties, but those of love and philosophy! I know

you will ; I know I shall be blest with my liberal, rational, high-minded Isabel."

Poor Isabel ! dearly did she at that moment pay for all the applause her bold, free-thinking sentiments had ever obtained her.

Emboldened by her stupified silence, Lord Tredegare proceeded, in the free language of libertinism, to descant on the raptures of such a connection, where mind, he said, was triumphant over matter.

This once favourite expression roused the stunned senses of Isabel.

Tearing herself from him, she arose : holding her beating temples with both hands, she murmured " softly ; still, still my brains !" Then turning her large dark eyes, gleaming with fire, on the still kneeling peer, and pushing back the close cap from her white deathly forehead, " Look, miscreant," said she, " read well that brow ; is adulteress written there ? Think-

est thou, base minion of a madman's creed, that Isabel will stoop to vice? Look again, if thou canst, is baseness written there? Go, poor wretch! and learn from me there is a place of everlasting torment prepared for such as thee! Oh! mad infatuation! Was it for such reptiles as this, to be as a god among them, that I slighted the living God, broke his commands, trampled on his laws, and set his word at defiance? Go, wretch! say to thy idle companions thou hast seen Isabel, and though fallen like Lucifer, she is grand compared with thee. Go, and if thou darest open its sacred page, study that book so long neglected and insulted, and see if 'thou shalt commit adultery' be one of the commands. Weep not, dear child," continued she, turning to the terrified Clara, "thy mother will not stain thy fair fame; if she can spare thee the pang that now rends her own heart, she will not have suffered in vain."

A violent scream produced a fit of convulsion at the moment that nurse Hunter entered the apartment.

“ There,” said Isabel, turning the convulsed child towards Lord Tredegare, “ go, now, and add to your other titles *murderer* !”

So saying, she quitted the apartment, leaving the confounded, crest-fallen peer, to gnaw his nether lip at leisure ; and curse his crooked fate, in what terms he thought proper.

“ Ah, madam,” said Mrs. Hunter, “ there’s all this pile of letters says the same tale, I know ; so I told Mrs. Delville, and she would not let you have them. But you see, ma’am, the gentlemen all think that you have no religion, and what is to prevent you following the fashion ?”

“ What indeed, nurse,” said Isabel ; “ but give me the letters, I shall be taught humility yet.” She opened them, and found they were, indeed, all on the same subject. Various were the offers of

splendid protection made to this open disciple of reason and liberality ; her own arguments, her own sentiments, were returned on her in rich profusion — twisted into the very channel that Isabel had always protested against. But, as one of her friends, in his letter, observed, “from the avowed sceptic, and the warm admirer of Mary Wolstoncraft, no very rigid notions of virtue or chastity could reasonably be expected.”

“Oh!” exclaimed Isabel, “come hither all ye daughters of sentiment, ye reasoning, calculating, philosophising children of pride and self ; see to what the firmest mind may be brought. Come hither ye doubting enquirers, throw Voltaire, Rousseau, D’Alembert, and all their tribe, into the flames. Doubt no longer, but this day decide God is God, and serve him *humbly*.”

The violence of these emotions threw her into strong convulsive hysterics ; in the midst of which, persons came from

Lord Tredegare to take possession of the house; and the senseless Isabel was placed in her friend's palanquin, and with her children, nurse, and Kitty, conveyed to the hospitable abode of the truly Christian Eliza; where, by an illness of some weeks, the stubborn will, and proud unbending spirit of the now subdued Isabel, was at last taught submission — at last brought humbly to sue for mercy at His foot-stool, who hath graciously invited the weary and heavy laden to come unto him, with the promise, “I will give you rest.”

CHAP. III.

THE marriage of Horace, as may naturally be expected, was not productive of happiness to either party. Matilda, in marrying a man of more than doubtful character, sought rather to escape further torment and persecution, than a friend or guide; and hoped rather to enter more unreservedly into the world and its pleasures, than to find her happiness in the domestic circle. Horace was handsome, gay, and amusing. Mr. and Mrs. Fitzallen were the life of society, the ornament of every gay party, and the envy of the young and thoughtless. St. Aubin's house was large enough for the increased family; and while his resources were large enough also, all went on very well. Matilda was naturally of an easy

temper, disposed to be happy, and without difficulty persuaded to act contrary to her better knowledge and feelings, for want of that decision necessary to form or sustain a valuable character.

Thus passed the first few months of their union. Horace was from home a great deal, and neither Matilda, nor her father, doubted his being constantly employed in the duties of a lucrative profession ; from which he would be able to draw the sums necessary to support the enlarged style of living and increased establishment he had without compliment introduced. He was fond of giving large and expensive dinners, and on such occasions went far beyond his acquaintance in luxury, observing, that he still retained his Irish taste *pour le menage*.

He was gone with a hunting party into the country ; and Matilda, who expected shortly to become a mother, was lounging on a sofa by the fire, with a volume of Madame de Stael's *Delphine* in her

hand, when she was surprised by the now unusual occurrence of a visit from Agnes Courtland.

“I thought,” said Matilda, “you had quite forgotten me, Agnes; it is ages since you called. I am always at home of a morning, and pleased to see my friends.”

“I am glad to find you class me among that number,” replied Agnes: “as a friend, I shall always be happy to see you; but as a morning visitor, you must not expect me often. You know, I believe, that such a waste of time is contrary to my principles.”

“Really, Agnes, I had forgotten it; but I know you are very singular, as all you fanatical people are. Pray is Harriet Acton become quite of the religious set.”

“I have reason to hope Harriet is an altered and improved character; but I have not lately seen her; she has been some time in the country with your hus-

band's old friends, the Penns ; and Mrs. Penn writes me, they find her a most affectionate, open-hearted, tender nurse and companion."

" Dear, how silly ; well, I should not wonder if she turned Quaker. I have often wondered we never met her anywhere, for we visit so constantly, that every body at all fashionable must come under one's eyes now and then."

" Do you find so much visiting conducive to domestic happiness, Matilda ?"

" I assure you quite so : Horace could not live, but in the world ; and I like it very much, so you see we must be happy."

" But you will soon have other claims on your time and attention."

" Yes, indeed, very delightful ones ; not that I shall make a slave of myself to the brat, as too many young women do ; and by so doing, lose their beauty, their fashion, their figures, and very

often their husbands' hearts. I will do no such thing; I mean to be as gay then as now, and only see the child when it is clean and good. I hope it will be as handsome as its father; pretty children are so amusing."

"I fancy," returned Agnes, "few mothers would allow their children were not pretty; and still fewer, that they were not amusing. But I hope your concern will be to make your offspring good and wise. Do you read much mornings?"

"No, indeed, I have so much to do mornings in preparation for evenings, that very little reading does for me."

"But Mr. Fitzallen, does he not read to you sometimes?"

"Yes, he often reads French to me, but I am but a very indifferent French scholar; and he reads a great deal on politics, but I am no politician; so you see I gain but little by his studies. And then that counting-house takes up so

much of his time ; and after all, a counting-house is very vulgar ; don't you think so ?”

“ It would be much more natural I should think so than you, Matilda. Do pray tell me where you, a native American, picked up that fine Lady British sentiment ?”

“ Oh,” replied Matilda, laughing, “ I have heard Horace say it ; and I am a little angry at its robbing me of so much of my husband's society.”

“ To what counting-house does Fitzallen belong, Matilda ?”

“ What a strange question, Agnes ; why of course to his own.”

“ I beg your pardon, my dear ; but I did not before know Mr. Fitzallen was in any concern ; however, I am extremely happy to hear it.”

“ What nonsense you talk, Agnes ; you must excuse my laughing at you ; but really you stay boxed up thinking of religion, until you know nothing. You

have been talking of the Penns, and yet say you did not know Mr. Fitzallen was engaged in any concern."

"Why, in what way do the Penns influence him now?"

"Only by his being in that house; the sole purpose for which he came to America."

"I may now say to you, Matilda, what nonsense you talk; you certainly cannot suppose, that I do not know all sort of connection between Mr. Fitzallen and Mr. Penn has ceased this long time since, even before your marriage."

The consternation visible in Matilda's countenance convinced Miss Courtland, that the wife, at least, was unacquainted with her husband's disgrace; though every one in Philadelphia could have told her of it.

"This," said she at last, "is some mistake, I assure you, Agnes; for had it been true, you know I must have heard of it from Fitzallen; and I declare this

is the first hint I ever received of such an event : it is certainly a most ridiculous mistake. However, I shall ask Horace how such a report could have become current : he will be much amused at it."

" I wish it were only an amusement, Matilda ; but you will do well to name it to your husband. Did you ever see any part of Mr. Penn's family ?"

" Never : you see they are so strict, and we are sogay, that we are never likely to meet ; and as they did not think it necessary to call on me when I married, as it may be termed, into the family, I of course shall never seek any of them."

" My dear Matilda, you surprise me : supposing what I have said of the commercial affairs to be untrue, yet you would not expect Mrs. Penn, or her family, to visit at your husband's house, surely ?"

" Indeed I should ; such narrow, illiberal prejudice - I have no patience

with: such a fuss about a nonsensical *faux pas* that happens every day, and not worth talking of: it is only ignorance of the fashionable world that makes people notice such a thing. Horace says, that in every part of Europe, such a circumstance would have given her *eclât*; and so it would here, if they had managed well."

"If you make but little progress in the French language, Matilda, you advance rapidly in its liberal sentiments. But all this is very foreign from my business here this morning, which was with your husband."

"He is from home, and his return quite uncertain."

"I know he is from home; but you have his address, Matilda?"

"Yes, that is one that will find him; but his pursuit is entirely pleasure, so that an address must be uncertain."

"Not entirely pleasure, I believe; however, do you write him, saying,

Alfred Courtland will not prevent his returning to Philadelphia, but expects to hear no more of him. Deliver your message faithfully, and take my advice, make yourself more *au fait* of your husband's concerns : you should have but one heart, and one interest ; and be careful, Matilda, to keep conscious rectitude in view in all you do and say."

" I am sure, Agnes, you quite alarm me ; it is always my wish to do right, and I always do what appears best."

" This is not always enough ; instead of your *wish*, let it be your *determination* to do right : do that which not only appears, but decidedly is best, to the cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye. You have embarked on a tempestuous sea, and all you have for it, is patience on one hand, and decision on the other. May you be directed by that guide you have hitherto neglected, or refused."

Matilda thought her cousin very severe

and cross ; what could she possibly mean by it all ; what had Alfred to do with Horace returning, or remaining up the country ; or what could she mean, by saying he had no connection with Mr. Penn : yet her memory thus awakened, she could recollect several circumstances that appeared to corroborate this fact ; and her father coming in from his morning ramble, she related to him all that Agnes had said.

“ I fear, my poor child,” said St. Aubin, “ you have made a very foolish bargain ; I have for some time doubted that all was right with Horace ; and this day I met an old friend, who has given me such a deplorable account of his conduct, that I am determined, when he returns, to enquire into it ; and if it be true, he shall remain here no longer. I will do any thing for you ; but I will not give expensive dinners, keep a large establishment, and bring myself to poverty, to maintain idleness : nay, child, do not

weep, be happy he is discovered at last, before it is too late. Oh, if you had but married your cousin Alfred."

"He never asked me, papa. I am not religious enough for him; and you know you always said I was good enough, and that religion was nonsense. I dare say it is all stories about my poor Horace; but I shall go and write him directly, we shall then know the truth."

But as we are better informed than Matilda, it is not necessary to wait the return of Horace Fitzallen, to say that his acquaintance with Sir Clement Leslie led him into many extravagances, which far exceeded his income; and his acquaintance with Macdonald; and his set, into many vices that the other circle dreamt not of. With the former, Horace would drink, dance, sing, visit, and bet; with the other, all those, beside every low vice that democracy invariably leads to. His visits at the counting-house were short, and far

apart. In one of these, he recognized Charles Penn at his old station;—a distant “How dost thee do?” was the only notice Charles bestowed on him, and the pride of Horace felt dreadfully insulted, thus to be overlooked by a quaker merchant’s son — he one of the first families in Ireland: a Baronet to be slighted! it was not to be borne; it would be long before they should see him again.

And so it was; Horace was then in pursuit of Matilda, pleasure, and vice; how then could he find time for business. But he often wanted money, and on the strength of it, being six months since he was settled with, he called on the good merchant for this necessary article. The old gentleman calmly counted out a hundred pounds, then laying his hand on them, he said, “Thou hast now, Horace, been in this place two years and a half: thy conduct hitherto will not allow me to think of taking thee into this concern. I am told thou art about to marry Matilda

St. Aubin; if thou dost, and alter thy way of life, thou mayest yet be continued at a salary; but it is time to decide, either cleave to us or leave us — the one hundred pounds I have here are not thy due, for thou hast already received more than thy three years stated salary; but I have received much mercy, and would be merciful to thee. But remember, the first proof I have that thou art continuing thy life of drunkenness and low debauchery, I cast thee off for ever.”

So saying, he placed the money before Horace, who, muttering something about the company of gentlemen and the income of a butler, gathered it together and disappeared: he thought with chagrin of what had passed; felt mortified at not being sure of an easy share in the concern, and determined to be more steady. But his connections were not easily thrown off, religion, morality, even decency, was set at nought; and

before another month, Horace had, by gambling, involved himself in debts of a serious amount.

Now it was, that aware he had forfeited all right to the house of Penn and Co. he hastened on his marriage with Matilda, who, turning a deaf ear to her better advisers, married him.

The day after, a forged acceptance to a considerable amount was offered for payment at the counting-house of Robert Penn : a few lines from the merciful old man conveyed his pardon and blessing to Horace, and forbade him ever again entering his doors.

Horace was glad to find the matter blow over so quietly, and, as another provision was found, cared but little about it. He was still received in gay company, still noticed by the idle and frivolous, and among the democratic, exiled Europeans, the unprincipled, atheistical Americans, and infidels of all countries,

he was courted as a man of genius and education.

But such society will debase the mind, and bring a superior understanding to its own level. Horace gradually sunk; he who, three years before, had said, "I walk as a god among them," was now content to be an equal, and sometimes to acknowledge, in a ranting printer, or a roaring shoemaker, a man of superior sense; — and, agreeably to his own creed, talents *alone* made one man superior to another.

At one of these noisy meetings Horace had advanced more than even in a land of freedom could be advanced with safety; he was boldly contradicted, a liberty Horace never could put up with; one word followed another, until the nervous arm of Horace left his opponent extended, to all appearance lifeless.

The man was a tenant of Alfred Courtland's, and the father of a family.

Horace knew that, in Alfred, the man's cause would find a defender; flight was, therefore, all that remained for him, and the hunting party offered a feasible excuse. The man, however, recovered, and Alfred had hopes that he would be materially benefited by the severe chastisement; he therefore commissioned his sister to visit Matilda, and recall her husband in the manner that might appear most advisable.

Horace returned, and to St. Aubin's enquiries replied with haughty insolence, until, losing patience, the old gentleman desired him to provide another home for his wife, for longer they should not remain with him.

This Horace treated with cool sarcastic ridicule, asking him what he supposed made him put on the chains of matrimony, but to secure a comfortable home? and having done so, he was not fool enough to give it up to satisfy a cross old man.

Matilda's first-born son came into the world without a father's anxious blessing : that father was then gone with his friend Macdonald up the country.

Matilda bathed its little face with tears, and recollected what she had declared to Agnes Courtland to be her intention after its birth. But pleasure had already lost its charm, and Matilda seldom went into company but with a heavy heart and languid spirits : these were no recommendations, and Mrs. Fitzallen soon ceased to be sought or invited.

When Horace returned, the sight of his child awoke all that remained of good or kind within him ; he affectionately caressed both mother and boy, and declared he should never feel happy when absent from them.

Poor Matilda was again blest ; her hopes were considerably lowered since the day she became a wife. Would Horace stay with her, love his child, and look

and speak thus kind, she would ask no more; her father's income would support them, and she could do without luxury.

So she might, but her husband could not; and, to allure him home, Matilda covered her table with delicacies and wines hitherto unknown, and highly improper for the moderate fortune of St. Aubin.

For a year it succeeded tolerably; but the birth of a second child produced no rapture, and the third was pronounced a bore.

Matilda knew not how or where her husband lived; he seldom came to her but for money, or continued longer than until he obtained it: his manner was generally kind, but he protested no man could live in the constant society of a weeping wife and squalling brats — that a few days, occasionally, were as much as she could expect from him.

St. Aubin urged, incessantly, the pro-

priety of a separation; he would, he said, go with her to any part of the world, where they might live frugally and in peace. But his property was daily decreasing, and her family increasing.

Agnes Courtland, her brother, Emma Hammond, and her husband, all joined their forces to accomplish this prudent measure.

Matilda would weep—promise to think—then weep again—determine to leave Philadelphia with her father and children—see her husband that evening, and next day declare her sense of duty would not let her leave him.

Worn out with this weak, vacillating conduct, Emma Hammond ceased to concern herself about them—her own family was fast increasing; but, influenced by love for his eternal welfare, her husband proposed adopting the eldest son of Horace, on condition that the parents should leave him entirely to the guidance of his protectors.

Horace, professing a great affection for his children, made a bluster about giving him up. But Matilda, who found it difficult to maintain and clothe her children, (and, beside, felt internally convinced that Emma would be a better mother than herself to him,) felt but the kindness, and gratefully accepted the offer on their own terms.

Matilda had now been married seven years, and was the unhappy mother of six children when her indulgent father died, lamenting, with his latest breath, that he had neglected the concerns of immortality until the eleventh hour; and had, by not cultivating in his child a spirit of religion and a love for its precepts, brought her into the state of wretchedness, both of body and mind, in which he was now called to leave her.

He impressively urged on her the necessity of practical religion, and entreated she would, for herself and chil-

dren, decidedly embrace the Christian precepts and pursuits.

Matilda wept her fond father with tears of unmingled grief, and resolved to amend her life, and strive to extract, by the alchymy of religion, sweetness from its bitter potion.

Horace was far from home at this trying season ; but had he been at home, Matilda had little to expect from his commiseration or sympathy.

He who was in the constant habit of execrating his own father for living too long, was not very likely to grieve for the death of his wife's ; especially as it put her in immediate possession of a certain property.

In this, as in every other day of woe, Matilda found Agnes Courtland and her brother the kindest and firmest friends.

They had both exerted all their powers to make St. Aubin leave the wreck of his fortune beyond the reach of Horace, as a security from absolute poverty to

the poor Matilda and her infant; but the weakness of father and daughter interposed to prevent this judicious arrangement.

Matilda was quite sure such a thing would drive him from her for ever; while, on the contrary, liberality and kindness would bind him securely to his home and family.

St. Aubin was afraid to offend him even after his death, or to do any one thing that might give him cause of complaint, or increase his inattention to his wife and children.

The Courtlands thought this sorry reasoning; but, in compliance with the tears of Matilda, forbore to press any further, and the disposition was made as favourable to Horace as he could have wished.

For a time, Matilda had reason to exult in her generosity. Horace was again the gay, cheerful, good-humoured Horace who had won her early affections;

— their house was again the seat of hilarity — their children delightful, and themselves happy. Matilda felt the first days of her marriage return, and looked and felt so perfectly content, that her kind cousin almost hoped they might, at last, be rationally happy.

“ Hope it not, Agnes,” said Harriet Acton, “ this sun-shine cannot last — it is only one of those brilliant beams that so often precede a storm, and Matilda will but feel the more benighted when its rays are withdrawn.”

“ What a pity,” replied Agnes, “ that such should be the possibility ; but they are both of them past youth now, and I would fain hope that interested motives, if nothing better, will make Fitzallen careful of this last property ; and careful industry would wonderfully improve him.”

“ I repeat the words of Harriet,” said Alfred, “ hope it not ; nothing but a radical change of heart can ever bring

about an event so desirable, and, as yet, Horace offers not the least room to suppose such is his happy case ; and, for poor Matilda, her good resolutions have disappeared like the morning dew — such a want of stability, I might say of character, is truly deplorable.”

“ It is delightful to see her now,” said Harriet, “ if one did not feel that it cannot continue ; really her woe-clad countenance never became natural, one saw it year after year without becoming reconciled to it. Now I again see the happy Matilda of early days — oh ! that her happiness were but built on a sure foundation.”

“ Would that it were, my dear Harriet,” replied Agnes ; “ but I fear she does not yet see the necessity of that change of character, without which every foundation must be insecure.”

“ Now, my dearest Harriet,” said Alfred, “ it must be allowed much of this evil arose from Matilda becoming

the wife of a man with whose character she was totally unacquainted, and, of course, without consideration; but, on the other hand, it is as possible to err by considering too long : a case in point, I knew and loved you several years before I was satisfied that my sister could be made perfectly independent, and I afford to marry; or that your character possessed sufficient stability in the ways of wisdom, to authorise my placing my happiness in your keeping. Those difficulties have happily been done away a long, long time, Harriet; I am ashamed to say how long. With all the ingenuousness natural to your disposition, you have acknowledged I was dear to you; why then, sweet girl, this delay? we are both growing older every day, and while you delight in Matilda's happy looks, do pray bestow such on me, by giving me your dear self."

"Indeed, my dear Alfred, it is the very happiness of these looks that makes

me hesitate. To marry an every-day character, in possession of every-day blessings, requires but little courage ; you may rationally hope to increase that felicity, but you are so richly blest, so highly endowed, and so beyond expression deserving and superior, that it requires —— I know not what I would say, but that your happiness is a thousand times dearer to me than my own ; if I could add to it, if I could be sure of not decreasing it even, I should not longer hesitate.”

“Excess of generosity, my beloved Harriet,” replied Alfred, tenderly pressing her hand “often becomes injustice : this is just your case ; but doubt not your power of adding to my happiness. I am not an adept at fine speeches, even when influenced by love as warm and as pure as ever warmed an English heart ; thus, let me but hold my Harriet and my faithful Agnes to my breast, and call them both my own, by the endearing

titles of wife and sister, and on earth I can ask no more — my cup may run over, but can never be less than full.”

Harriet loved too well to trifle, and a short time after saw her the happy wife of the no longer young or poor, but the respectable, religious, excellent Alfred, Lord Courtland ; though the only title or distinction now coveted by either was that of a humble Christian.

Miss Courtland continued to reside with them, and it is unnecessary to add, that a marriage formed on such a basis, and with views so correct, proved one of as much felicity as this transitory life admits of.

Among those who honoured Mrs. Courtland with their notice on her entering on a new state, was the half-fashionable Matilda, who, under pretence of obliging her husband, had already ceased to evince any gratitude or particular affection for these kind friends ; but happy in themselves, and clear-sighted to

the weakness of Matilda's character, they felt no resentment and testified no coolness toward the gratified wife, whose whole conversation turned on the fortunate change in her situation and prospects. Her husband was all she could wish, her children well and cheerful, and herself the most enviable of women; and such, she said, she should continue, spite of Ellen's cross forebodings and stiffness, who would not visit or be visited by Fitzallen; pretending not to give credit to his perfect reformation.

Matilda's present auditors, who were all very fond of the matronly, correct, and formal Ellen Hammond, could only offer their sincere wishes that Fitzallen's change of conduct might proceed from change of heart — in which case it would daily increase, and Ellen joyfully acknowledge the happy alteration.

CHAP. IV.

SLOWLY rising from the bed of severe and complicated illness, Isabel acknowledged with heartfelt gratitude the hand which had laid her there to be not only just, but merciful. Raising her children's hands in her own emaciated ones, she would teach them to adore the mercy that had not cut them off in deserved wrath, but had opened a way and provided a mediatorial sacrifice for them. She would instruct them to pray for humility, and the grace of perfect willing obedience ; adding, " Oh ! if my life be but spared to warn them against the rocks on which their parents foundered, and from which Divine mercy alone could snatch the wreck, I shall not have suffered one pain too many, one sorrow in vain."

“Deem me not ungrateful,” said she to Mrs. Delville, “that I say so little of your unequalled kindness and generosity; believe me, Eliza, I deeply feel it, and as deeply own it; but, my dear, your reward is on high, there is ‘laid up for you an inheritance incorruptible;’ oh, that I could say the same for myself; but I have no reason of complaint; great, very great have been my mercies. But when I reflect on my sinful rejection of offered mercy, my wilful, nay blasphemous adoption of gross infidelity, my long and provoking disobedience, my pride, stubbornness, and self-opinion, it appears a catalogue too black for even Divine mercy to pardon. Oh, could a life of penitence, and constant acts of humiliation, but atone for such crimes, how cheaply would they be atoned.”

“Beware, dear Isabel,” returned Mrs. Delville, “of expecting to earn a pardon by merit of your good works;—a full and perfect atonement is provided,

by means of which, *infinite* Mercy can blot out all your transgressions : but hope nothing from your penitence, and acts of humiliation, independent of it ; for rest assured, it is but your old enemy, pride, under another disguise. As I have told you at many former periods, I tell you now, ‘ of yourself you can do nothing ;’ but through Him, who has brought you this far, you may do every thing. From your strong convictions, and character, I have hope of seeing you a *decided Christian* character. Remember, here, my dearest Isabel, decision is absolutely necessary ; you must serve God, or Baal, there is no middle path ; I think it needless to say, this day choose.”

“ Oh, no Eliza, I have surely chosen the portion of the just, and am determined, henceforward, to cast in my lot among the followers of the Lord ; but I know and feel my own pride and wickedness, hence arise all my fears ; but if a gracious Supreme will accept the deposit,

I surely will give him my whole heart, and trust my steps to his guidance. But what an expression, 'trust my steps,' where I would day and night implore with a broken spirit, to be led, to be taught, to be directed. 'Trust,' indeed; oh! how poor are words to express the feelings of a heart so variously agitated as mine."

Previous to her illness, Isabel had expressed several times an intention of returning to Ireland. Under her present circumstances, it was extremely difficult to advise; nor did the only friends her wayward fortune had left her, feel at liberty to oppose such an intention. They were aware that Isabel would never accept from friendship what her own exertions might procure: but in what way those exertions were to be made was the important question. She might, perhaps, among the few opulent families resident in Madras, find full employ as a teacher of accomplishments; but here a doubt arose as to her capa-

bility, since her marriage, a residence in a hot climate, and a variety of occupations unknown before, had brought the once favourite amusement of drawing into neglect, and from neglect naturally grew distaste, so that for several years it had been entirely given up. Music appeared quite out of the question, she had never been a first-rate performer, and of late years resigned it altogether. Languages alone remained, and even here a difficulty arose : she read and spoke several fluently ; but in that thorough grammatical knowledge, and that patient drudgery over nouns, verbs, and adjectives, rules and constructions, necessary to a teacher of languages, she was absolutely deficient. Thus perplexed and divided, Colonel Delville felt it his duty to leave her entirely to the guidance of her own judgment ; and in the mean time lost no opportunity of winding up all the affairs in the East, in the most favourable manner circumstances would

admit of. After every thing was sold, and every private debt paid, as well as those public ones in which Mr. Escott was more particularly interested, the liberal kindness of the man of business, who refused any remuneration for the trouble he had for many months taken in the concern, alleging, that he could much better afford to talk for nothing, than Mrs. Escott to pay him for talking — beside, he was getting old, and had a right to indulge himself — and Colonel Delville's active benevolence, reserved from the wreck of all that was once magnificent and luxurious, the sum of two hundred pounds; but how best to appropriate it, was a query not easily decided. Isabel, however, soon put the matter out of doubt: she was sitting in an easy chair, watching with tearful eyes the tiny efforts of her smiling boy to overturn the cage of a tame Maccaw, that was playing with him; and regretting, that to destroy and overturn

should be among the very first inclinations of infancy; thus proving how prone the heart naturally is to evil, when the door flew open, and Clara, with a face of rage, drowned in tears of passion, came in exclaiming, "Do pray, dear mamma, let us go away from this frightful house, I cannot, I will not remain here any longer."

"What is the matter, Clara?" mildly asked Mrs. Delville.

"I did not speak to you, ma'am; I do not wish ever again to speak to one of the name of Delville. Mamma, shall I order the carriage, that we may go away this evening?"

"I have no carriage, Clara; wherever you go for the future, you must walk."

"How can that be, mamma? What is become of our two carriages?"

"They are sold, to enable me to pay my debts."

"What are debts, mamma?"

"Do you remember, when your gold

breakfast set was purchased, you were told it would cost a great deal of money; now you know, when you took the man's plate, it was right to give him the money, and until it was given, we owed him a debt: do you understand?"

"Perfectly, mamma; but I do not understand what that disagreeable Ellen Delville meant, by telling me it would become me better to be humble, for pride and poverty were bad companions."

"Was it this, Clara, that put you into such a naughty passion, and made you rude and ungrateful to our kind friend, Mrs. Delville?"

"No, indeed, mamma, that was not half of it; every body in the nursery were very insolent to me. Ellen, after what I told you, got the Bible and began reading; so I told her it was a foolish, unreasonable book, and I would tear it to pieces if she brought it there, for in my own papa's house there was no such nonsense talked; then, dear mamma, I cannot tell

you what her nurse said, it was so bad; only, mamma, let us go away from them all, I don't mind walking, for I would rather meet a jackal than any of them."

"Cease those tears and this passion, my child," said Isabel, "and listen to me." Isabel then, with considerable patience, and much affection, strove to make her rebellious daughter understand, that the book she had so despised was the word of God, and given for her instruction and study; that there was another world, in which she would be rewarded or punished, according to the deeds done in this world; that passion and ingratitude were sins, for which she would be punished; that God saw and heard all she did and thought; and that from him she received her life, and every thing she had.

"Why, mamma," interrupted Clara, "if all this is true, did you never tell me so before? it is just like what nurse

and Kitty have often told me ; but I called them silly prejudiced fools ; and that is why Ellen hates me, and loves Cecilia, because Cecilia believes it all, and I do not ; if it was true, papa would have told me, I am sure, so I shall only believe what he said.”

Every word of her self-willed child spoke daggers to the heart of Isabel, who here saw the evil seed she had herself sown springing fast up into the blade : however, by a violent effort stifling her feelings, she resumed her conversation ; telling Clara, that her papa would have told her all, and a great deal more than she had, if he had not been too ill before he died, or if it had pleased God to spare his life. She then, in simple terms, described the situation in which her father’s death had left them, the kindness of Colonel and Mrs. Delville, and their present destitute situation. “ Now, my dear Clara,” continued she, “ think how ungratefully you have

behaved to those kind friends, by disturbing the harmony of Mrs. Delville's nursery, and even by being insolent to her yourself: by so doing, you have offended God and your best friend; go, my dear, acknowledge your fault, and entreat pardon of both." Clara's face and neck became crimson, as she proudly replied, "Ask pardon, mamma, never! What is Mrs. Delville better than I am? I did not speak to her when she spoke to me, so that I have a right to be offended. I will not ask pardon of any one."

Knowing that Clara's resolves were always positive ones, and not choosing to let her see her triumph, Mrs. Delville took an opportunity of quietly escaping by another door; while Isabel again resumed the task of tutoring to obedience the bold and obstinate spirit of her often boasted child of reason. After endeavouring for a long time to make her acknowledge, in some degree, the duty she owed to God, and the obligations

of gratitude she was under to him, Clara suddenly interrupted her with, "Did you say, mamma, God made us all?"

"Yes, my child."

"And does God kill us?"

"He takes away the life he gave, when it seems good to him."

"And it is he who makes us all, is it not?"

"Yes, and it is he who lately restored us all from sickness, instead of causing us to die in our sins, and be punished eternally."

"Well, mamma, and it is he who gives people all their good things, did you not say?"

"Yes; it is to him you owe that you have a house, or friend's house, wherein to rest, after so many misfortunes; and see, my Clara, that you always gratefully acknowledge those mercies."

"Do you like people to tell stories, I mean falsehoods, mamma?"

“Certainly not ; it is a most dreadful crime.”

“Then, mamma, I must not say I love God, or feel grateful to him ; he took away my first brother, and gave you and papa a great deal of illness ; then he gave me the fever, then he took away my dear, dear, papa ; and gave you, mamma, and my sisters and me, that dreadful long illness ; besides this, he has taken away all our riches and grandeur ; and perhaps will give it to Ellen Delville : so I think he has treated us all very cruel, and we have no right to love him. I do not, and I will not love him ; and I have given you a very good reason for it ; and that you know, mamma, you and dear papa used to say was all that was necessary for any thing. Oh, I could hate him for killing my papa.”

Isabel felt unequal to the trying contest : self-condemnation adding its poignancy to every other feeling, she ceased to speak, and wept bitterly.

“Do not cry, mamma,” said Clara, affectionately; “you never used to cry before papa died, and all this about God was talked of; oh, do not, do not cry so, my darling mamma.”

“It is you, Clara, who make me cry, who make me unhappy.”

“Oh, do not say that, my dear mamma, or I shall kill myself; for in all the world, I only love Cecilia and you; and Cecy is grown so fond of Ellen, that she does not care for me; and if you, my own mamma, say I make you cry, and do not love me, I will kill myself, and go to my papa. Oh, how I do wish I was quite dead.”

Colonel Delville entered the room during this passionate exclamation. Sitting down, he drew the beautiful girl towards him, and by judicious kind expostulation, presently brought her to own herself wrong, in being so often out of temper, and to wish she knew how to

be mild, like Cecilia. It was the first time in Clara's life she had ever acknowledged a fault, or thought any one better than herself: she loved Cecilia fondly, but usually bore unbounded sway over her. On bidding her mother good night, she threw her little arms around her neck, exclaiming, "Never again, my idol mamma, say your Clara makes you cry; oh, I will do any thing to make you happy, any thing; even try to love God, and Ellen, if you desire it; but do not, do not cry; let us go to Ireland, away from it all."

Isabel pressed her to her aching heart, breathed over her a mother's anxious prayer, and dismissed her.

"I think," said Clara, kissing the Colonel as she passed him, "I could love you, if you were not Ellen's papa, or if you did not love Ellen so much."

The Colonel smiled as he said, "Go to your room now, and come to me to-morrow; I will convince you from rea-

son that I ought to love Ellen, and you ought to love me."

Clara shook her beautiful little head as she retired, saying, "Never, never, my good sir."

"Oh," sighed Isabel as the door closed, "what a proof is that dear child of the sins of my life, how am I ever to repair the mischief done her young mind."

"The task may be somewhat difficult, my dear Isabel," replied the Colonel, "but it is to be done by care and ever-watchful kindness; but as you have all her life taught her that she was a free-will agent, and inferior to none while she kept reason as her guide, be careful that you do not now fall into the opposite extreme: the human mind is not calculated for sudden transitions, nor in this case is it to be wished, since blind obedience and implicit credulity are as great faults in many respects, as the enquiring scepticism that we deplore.

Clara is doatingly fond of you, and will listen to your precepts and advice with attention; but you must be extremely cautious that you do not make that very fondness a fault, by working on it rather than on her heart: the child that resigns a desire because mamma wishes it only, will take the first opportunity of gratifying its inclinations in mamma's absence, as Clara would tell you with justice 'because those who oblige should be obliged.' Thus you see, dear Isabel, your plan of reason was not altogether wrong; you must still continue to convince your children's judgments by kindness and patience, and praying for a blessing on your endeavours, leave the result to Providence."

"I would gladly believe, my dear Colonel, that Providence will give me what I never yet possessed, patience and perseverance, and add a blessing to my industry: but when I contemplate the scene that lies before me, I tremble at the view,

all my resolution fades away, and I feel inadequate to any part of it; but this is wrong, very wrong. I have now tolerably renovated health, and shall, I hope, gain daily strength of body and mind: my views are, let me acknowledge with gratitude, those of a Christian, still defective and obscured with fears, but decidedly changed from conviction, and determinately bent on the attainment of that peace which passeth not away; but in the mean time there are active as well as passive duties, which loudly claim my exertions. I must," a deep convulsive sigh followed the words, "rouse from this lethargy of grief, and seek some way of returning to Ireland; but how is it to be done; I have never yet had courage to ask you in what manner the debts are settled, but I do it now, and await your reply with some degree of anxiety."

"I wish I could as easily remove all anxiety from your mind, my dear Isabel:

it is unnecessary to descend to disgusting particulars, but in one word, all are honourably paid, and a small sum remains to you : it is but small, yet sufficient to call forth gratitude, when you consider how dark an aspect every thing wore."

" My gratitude, Colonel, will, while life continues, be more yours than words can express. Alas ! latterly, words fall very short of expressing my feelings, or showing my heart — my heart, ah, perhaps I know not that myself."

" Talk not of gratitude to me, dear Isabel, but feel it with all your soul towards the widow's friend, the father of the fatherless, who has hitherto assisted you. But now say what are your wishes and intentions for the future, can I in any way assist you ?"

" My wishes are now bounded by the desire of maintaining and discharging my arduous duties to my darlings : my intention is to return to Ireland, to

seek my father's perfect forgiveness, and continue to reside with him. I am aware that he is not in affluent circumstances, but yet I think that with my four children I shall not be burdensome to him, as by exertion and economy we may perhaps do with a smaller establishment, and for every thing beyond food and lodging, I hope to strike on some plan of earning it independent of my father. But the question is, how am I to pay the passage for so many? and here your advice will be serviceable to me, for, alas, I as yet know but little of the value of money, or indeed any other useful thing; hard experience, dire necessity, will in time teach me all."

"Are you fully resolved on quitting the East, Isabel?" asked Mrs. Delville.

"Absolutely; my altered circumstances will be hard to bear any where, but here intolerable; it is impossible to remain here," replied Isabel, with a shudder.

Mrs. Delville shook her head as she

said with a smile, "If you were closely to examine that sentiment, my dear, you would find a great deal to condemn in it."

"I believe it, Eliza, and feel there is yet much pride in my sad heart, much to overcome; but the East is not a favourable climate for the growth of humility or religion."

"Perhaps not; but I would say, do not deceive yourself, or put off the work of improvement a single moment, only that I think you now see the need of this as well as I do, and will not lag by the way. The same ardour which once led you into the mazy windings of a system misnamed philosophy, will now lead you through the narrow path of truth and moral rectitude: understand, that by moral rectitude, I mean true Christianity."

"That ardour, Eliza, is greatly cooled, probably for ever gone: it is now but a poor service I can offer the Supreme

Being, the mere dregs of a worn-out constitution, broken spirit, and a sad heart; but such as it is, if he will accept it, it is all his own."

"If so, my dear Isabel, why this sad heart: you cannot give yourself to a Being with whose dispensations you are not satisfied; or love entirely him whose decrees you have not *forgiven*, are not *reconciled* to. This will appear to you severe, but it is the simple truth: if you had forgiven the Almighty for taking from you the delight of your eyes, the idol of your soul, you would become reconciled, and if reconciled, no longer sad; which sadness, if indulged, will unfit you for exertion, and offend Him from whom alone you have to expect every blessing."

"Surely, Eliza, such a dreadful loss as mine, and all its consequent horrors, may be felt without giving God offence: he does not, and do not you demand impossibilities. Time and grace may do

much towards healing it, but just now my heart is broken and my spirit sick. I acknowledge unbounded mercy, in that my beloved husband was not cut off at a stroke, and sent, with all his crimes upon his head unrepented, to a dread account, and in the forbearance testified toward my aggravated infidelity : for this, for you and for my children, I feel overwhelming gratitude : but oh ! let me weep my loss, the unspeakable loss of my poor infant ; it is his gain ; but I must still weep our total bereavement, at such a moment too : my poor little boy, you will never know a father's love, nor feel his loss."

For a few moments Isabel's feelings quite overcame her, and she sobbed in agony. "Thy will be done," is a degree of resigned acquiescence sometimes difficult to attain ; from one only source can it come under severe dispensations ; and Isabel, though she had began to draw from that fountain, and found its taste

pleasant, could not yet draw largely ; her measure was small, and her hands trembling ; her feet were not yet accustomed to the road that led to it ; and many weights dragged her down its steep ascent, or prevented her making rapid progress. Thus the wounds of her mind healed slowly ; she had taken largely of the caustic prepared to clean them ; but yet one gangrene rankled, and helped to prevent her drawing more largely from the living waters that should heal her every bruise and wound.

“ I have been thinking, Isabel,” said the Colonel, starting from a reverie, “ that this plan of yours of returning to Ireland will swallow up every sixpence of your remaining property ; would it not be better to try something here ? ”

“ Name it not, Colonel ; I have a strong feeling that drives me from this place, as from a scene of carnage, and impels me toward a sickly and poor father, as to a long-neglected positive duty. To leave

you and Eliza, my firm and well-trying friends, is like again tearing body and soul asunder; but it is a sacrifice that *must* be made, and if sufficient really remains to take us, the sooner we go the better: it is a dreadful step, and I would in mercy take it quickly.”

“ You have what may be made sufficient, but you will get there penniless, an evil of no small magnitude.”

“ And one I cannot yet figure to myself: it is a real misfortune under any circumstances to know so very little of the value of money as I do, but I should think I have yet superfluous ornaments, that may raise a sum sufficient to save me from going absolutely without the means of present subsistence.”

“ You are aware, I hope my dear, that all those things are dreadfully diminished in number lately,” said Mrs. Delville.

“ Yes; though I scarcely read the catalogue poor Kitty gave me, I discovered the loss of my most valuable articles;

they went I hope to pay just debts; if so, I rejoice at their loss."

"I wish I could say so," replied the Colonel, "but, on the contrary, your servants chose to make free with that and much more, according to the adage of making hay while the sun shines."

"Rather say collecting the ravages of a tornado, or going over a field of battle to rob the dead and dying. But it matters not, it is but vultures preying on a carcase: such is the world, or the major part of it; and 'who made thee to differ,' should be the enquiry of every heart that feels shocked at such senseless depravity. But, Colonel, let me entreat you will add to your kindnesses that of aiding our departure. I long to feel settled at home again, that I may apply to the labour of undoing all I have ever done for my girls, and of proving myself a mother to my unfortunate boy, who I scarcely yet know personally."

Seeing her thus determined, the

Colonel promised to accelerate their arrangements, a promise he faithfully and industriously kept. It was the season of the Company's vessels returning, and the fleet then waited but the appointment of a convoy. With some difficulty, and much interest, passages were procured for Isabel, her four children and Kitty Hunter, who proposed going with and sharing the weal or woe of her new mistress, an offer gratefully accepted by the subdued heart-sick Isabel.

Isabel daily gained strength, and a progressive growth in that religion she had so often ridiculed; but which was now become the delight of her soul, and from whence she drew hope and consolation under her every affliction. There is perhaps no Christian grace more characteristic of the religion to which it belongs, than hope; it is the natural support of those who are for a time subjected to trials, and whose success depends upon their perseverance: it ne-

cessarily supposes a fixed and entire preference of some state of things which is expected over that which is possessed : it has the peculiar power of so realising the fancy, and borrowing from futurity, that where it is lively and vigorous, it can shed a light on the most obscure path, can soften every sorrow, and make every labour light. Thus it was with Isabel, her awakened senses were now alive to a hope beaming immortality beyond the grave, and on this side to hope of rest, and a supply of the few real wants of nature at Fitzallen. Beside this, she hoped to lighten her father's declining days ; and so clear to her senses did the errors of popery now appear, that she thought it was only to set them forth in clear strong language, and their warmest advocate must bow before the truths of reformation.

Thus cheered and sustained, she made every preparation for her voyage with an alacrity and calmness that surprised

Mrs. Delville, who had so lately witnessed in her so much languor and weeping.

The day arrived on which the fleet were to sail, and Isabel's calmness began to yield; but she prayed fervently for strength to support her in this hour of trial, and her prayer was not in vain.

"Should we," said she at breakfast on the last morning, "never meet in this life, I think we may *now* hope to meet in another and more perfect state, after the storms of time and sense are blown over. A twelvemonth since this hope had not an existence: thus you see every evil has its counterbalancing good. But this is speaking lightly of so important a subject, and perhaps leading you to imagine that I am reconciled to my state, which, alas! is not the case."

"Hold fast, my dear Isabel," replied the Colonel, "that to which you have attained; be faithful to yourself and your God; place your confidence where you will not be deceived, namely on the rock

of ages. Your trials have been great, but not altogether singular; for such is the uncertainty of earthly blessings, that few probably pass even through a third part of life, without witnessing the dissolution of some attachments which were once dear to them; and none can advance to a mature age, without being sensible of a pang, deeply severe, in a long and awful separation from those they love. Yet in all our disappointments and sorrows, one friend is still near to us, whose kindness is ever most wakeful when we most need it, who can neither forsake us from levity, nor be snatched away from us by death. You will now find it an unspeakable consolation, that amidst all the changes and chances, the disappointments and vanities that may yet await you, there is one permanent and perfect Being, one friend that ‘sticketh closer than a brother;’ and he it is who has bid you leave your fatherless children to him, and he will provide for them, ‘and let your widows trust in me.’

“ Isabel, you cannot have a more powerful or faithful friend; to him I commit you : henceforward, your duties and your happiness are inseparably blended ; may grace and wisdom be bountifully bestowed on you and yours, and eternal happiness your rich reward. One thing more, dear friend, and I have done ; my growing family prevents my being a rich man ; but it is possible that you may find it difficult to provide for four children, if so, bear in mind that my godson shall find a father’s care, and a son’s provision from me ; and should this not be necessary, if I am spared and hold rank in the army, George Escott’s son shall never want a pair of colours.”

Isabel’s full heart forbid reply ; she pressed the Colonel’s hand in agony, held Eliza and her children to her aching heart, and without speaking turned from them to seek other friends in other regions.

CHAP. V.

ISABEL'S *compagnons du voyage* were an old gentleman, who had spent his life in India, and was returning with a large fortune, which he had now neither health nor youth to enjoy ; and to acquire which he had sacrificed his best days, domestic happiness, a good constitution, and every moral and religious principle : but he was rich, and to be rich is the grand desideratum of half the world. Beside him were two officers, whose sallow, hollow countenances and emaciated figures bore testimony to sufferings from fatigue and climate. Captain Clarkson, the eldest, bore with him a young interesting wife and two children ; the other, a Lieutenant Hudson, had lost an arm, and was confined chiefly

to his cot : a small cabin was appropriated to the use of Isabel and her family, which Mrs. Delville's ready kindness had well supplied with books, amusements for the children, implements of writing, and materials for work : and here, or leaning over the side of the deck watching the parting waves, and listening to the monotonous sound of the keel as it cut through the watery waste, Isabel spent many contemplative hours : often her busy memory would trace the feelings with which she had crossed the wide ocean eight years before, — her hopes, her prospects, and her enjoyments, how changed. Fancy would then rush forward to Fitzallen — she had left its hospitable walls almost an outcast : seven years of brilliant deceit and mischief had beguiled her into security, blinded her with self-love, and intoxicated her with the deleterious draughts of false philosophy : she had gaily sported on a flowery surface, nor saw beneath the

interminable gulf that yawned to receive her. One year she had spent in the furnace of affliction: a severe but certain physician had, in stripping the bandage from her eyes, showed the evils in their natural and disgusting colours: by drinking of a bitter cup, her senses were restored to clearness, the flowers faded from her path, and the yawning gulf, in all its appalling horrors, was close at her feet. She stood shivering on its brink, and in wild dismay looked round for some hand to help her, some place of refuge, some rock of support: the whole world offered none, and her sinking steps must have fallen, but that an outstretched arm from on high appeared to rescue her, while a powerful voice, crying, "Come hither all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved," sounded in her ears, and gave encouragement to her despairing soul.

Awakened to a sense of her deplorable

state, alive to the impressive truths of the Gospel, and looking with confidence, mingled with trembling, to the hope set before her, Isabel was about to present herself to the parent from whom she had fled, with shattered spirits, an orphan family, a widowed heart, poor, and sick, — to present herself uninvited, unexpected, and perhaps unwelcome, to ask as a boon the shelter and protection she had once spurned.

“If pride be not yet dead within me,” sighed Isabel, as she reviewed this state of her affairs, “surely this will destroy it: this is humbling indeed, this may subdue even my stubborn will.”

Raising her sad eyes, the quiet industry of her only servant caught her fixed attention.

“What are you so busy about, Kitty?” asked her mistress.

“I am making the young ladies frocks, ma’am: those they have on I thought might serve during the voyage, but Mrs.

Delville thought you would choose them to continue in mourning in Ireland, and it's for that I'm making these frocks."

"Who taught you to make frocks, Kitty?"

"My mother was my first teacher, ma'am; but my best was Mrs. Delville."

"Does Mrs. Delville know how to do these things?"

"Oh yes, ma'am, very well. I have heard her say she did not know much about it when she came to Madras; but love for her children, and a very little instruction, soon taught her."

"In what way, Kitty, did love for her children aid in teaching?"

"Why, ma'am, there is great pleasure in working for those you love; and I have often heard my dear mistress say, that large fortunes needed economy to provide for a family, and assist the distressed; yet she loved to see her children neatly dressed, and have their clothes well made."

“ I understand you, Kitty, perfectly, and wonder I never thought of it before. Kitty, you were truly fortunate in meeting with such a friend.”

“ Yes, ma’am, more than fortunate, it was the greatest blessing of my life, for by it I learnt to live, and I trust to die : she was the benefactress of my orphan state, and long as I live my gratitude and prayers are her due.”

“ How could you leave such a friend, Kitty, to go into uncertain retirement with me ? I am every day astonished at it.”

“ I thought it my duty, ma’am.”

“ Your duty, child, do pray explain yourself.”

“ Then, ma’am, in two ways it appeared to me a duty ; first I thought, nay was quite convinced, that Mrs. Delville would feel happier at my being with you than a stranger, on very many accounts ; again, I have always been taught to make myself useful. Mrs. Delville

used to say, there is no situation in life in which you may not do good; however narrow your sphere of action, there is yet some one in it to whom you may do or impart some good: so when I was a poor sickly girl, I used to teach the young ladies their letters, and their prayers, and explain to them all the pictures in the Bible, and all the pictures round the nursery, and talk to them about England: 'twas very little, but my mistress used to say, however small the seed, it might one day produce good fruit. So, ma'am, as I grew stronger, I strove to do more, and I hope you will not think me vain, if I give that as a reason for going to Europe with you."

"I do not think you vain, my good girl; I admire and esteem your motive. But explain yourself."

"When first I was in your nursery, ma'am, I found the young ladies knowing nothing of what I had been taught to think the most important subjects;

with some opposition then, and perseverance since, I strove to instruct them, and am happy to say, that by your assistance and fine example they are no longer ignorant of these things: but, ma'am, they are very different children; Miss Escott requires a great deal of management, and sweet Miss Cecilia a great deal of encouragement; dear little Eliza is very clever, but a stranger would not know her: then the baby, ma'am, my own little George, I could not leave, so it appeared to me that I could be more useful to your children, who are all fond of me, than to Mrs. Delville's, and more useful to you than a stranger, because I know all, and how to feel for you, and how to work for you and the dear children; so this, ma'am, made it in my opinion a duty, and I told Mrs. Delville so, who thought the same: then I determined, ma'am, by the grace of God, to do my utmost to be useful, and never more to leave you

while you will keep me ; and my mother thinks just as I do. Now, ma'am, you understand exactly my reasons."

" I do, Kitty, and blush to think how much more sense and consideration they display than is generally to be found among your superiors; but, by way of being useful, you must instruct me in the use of a needle and scissars, with which I am absolutely unacquainted."

" Dear ma'am, I shall be happy to give you all the instruction I can ; but surely I can do all you and the dear children want, without troubling you to learn any thing of the kind."

" It will be an amusement, my good girl; beside, as you say, I think it a duty."

This was an unanswerable argument to Kitty, and she immediately commenced the task of teaching Isabel and her daughters the humble accomplishment of plain sewing, by which many weary hours, in a long voyage, were

usefully and agreeably beguiled of their weight.

Her circumstances, feelings, and pursuits, made Isabel shun the little society it was in her power to meet in the narrow limits of a vessel ; but the children had made acquaintance with their fellow passengers, had learnt some particulars, and given in exchange their little stock of information.

Clara one day came to her mother ornamented with a beautiful pearl necklace — “ See, mamma,” said she, with childish delight, “ what a pretty ornament Lord Lawdere has given me ; is it not lovely ? ”

“ Very ; but how came Lord Lawdere to give it you, my dear ? ”

“ Because, mamma, he says my neck and shoulders deserve to be ornamented, they are so beautiful.”

“ I am sorry to hear Lord Lawdere is such a silly man ; but do you believe him, Clara ? ”

“ I don’t know, mamma,” replied the blushing child, “ but I think they are a great deal prettier than some I have seen.”

“ And who made you, Clara ?”

“ God, who made every thing.”

“ And if your shoulders had been very ugly, could you have altered them ?”

“ I suppose not, mamma.”

“ Then, whose merit is it if they are well formed, since you did not form them ?”

“ God’s, of course.”

“ Have you then reason to pride yourself on that which is the work of God alone ?”

“ I do not pride myself, dear mamma. I never thought of it until Lord Lawdere talked so much about it.”

“ I am afraid, Clara, he saw you were a vain little girl, and too ignorant to talk of any thing better than mere personal beauty, which is neither an honour nor a merit to any one to possess ; and there-

fore dressed you as we do dolls, that there might be something to admire in the otherwise uninteresting insensible.”

“ I hope, dear mamma, he did not think so. I assure you he very often called me interesting and entertaining.”

“ Perhaps, my dear, he found you entertaining in the same way you find your parrot entertaining — because it repeats all you have taught it, without one idea of its own.”

“ I have a very great mind to take back the necklace.”

“ Why, my dear, if you think it so ornamental and so beautiful, why not keep it ?”

“ Because I don’t choose to be considered a silly doll, and be dressed by strangers.”

“ Your reason is not very good, Clara; do you not think Eliza’s parroquet very beautiful ?”

“ Oh! very, mamma; the most beautiful creature in the world.”

“ Put the necklace round its handsome red neck — there, is it an improvement?”

“ Oh, no; pearls do not look well on scarlet.”

“ Then put it on the grey parrot — do they look well now?”

“ The bird looks better without them, but birds do not need ornaments.”

“ No, my dear, nobody *needs them*; it is only to see what improvement they make — try once more either Cecilia or your doll.”

“ Oh, Cecy, let me put them on your pretty white neck — there, mamma, see how pretty they are; though I do think Cecy looks just as well without them.”

“ But don’t you think, if Cecy were to cry, and be in a furious passion, that her neck grew as red as the parroquet’s, we should admire the necklace so much as not to see the naughty red neck?”

“ Ah, mamma, I know what you mean. Cecy never does do so; and I do

hope never to cry any more. However, Lord Lawdere shall have his necklace, I do not want ornaments. Why did he not give it to Cecy, I wonder?"

"I do not like him."

"But I suppose you never told him so?"

"Indeed I have, more than once."

"Why did you tell him such a rude thing, my child?" enquired her mother.

"Because, mamma, he was rude to me, and said bad words; and wanted me to sit on his knee, and — and —"

"And what, my love?"

"Why, mamma, he wanted me to let him put a fine chain on my neck, and, I think, that necklace; but I do not like such naughty old men."

"Oh, Cecy!" said the half-weeping Clara, "you are always so good and thoughtful, do pray teach me to be like you, that I may never more be so vain and silly."

"Our dear mamma has often taught you better than I can Clara; and you

know who can teach you better still, and make you not like me, but like what all good girls should be.”

“ Well, I’ll take back this frightful, stupid thing to that rude old lord, and then Cecy I am coming to read with you the last book Mrs. Delville gave us.”

It may be supposed that Isabel, clothed in the deepest widow’s mourning, still bearing the traces of recent sickness — retired and melancholy — silent and contemplative — was no object of passion to the worn-out veteran of debauched dissipation : but, on the contrary, those very circumstances gave her interest, and excited the satiated passions of Lord Lawdere. He was fatigued and disgusted with willing, smiling girls, or the bolder advances of more mature age, and had come on board sick of the sex—disgusted with all he knew or had ever loved, and determined never again to notice them — to live for himself and the pleasures of the table alone.

But the sight of Isabel shook these resolves. She was just at that age so often found more attractive than girlhood, and still beautiful, which, added to the deep dejection that absorbed her, gave an interest to her every graceful movement and every expression of her large softened eye, that charmed the son of sensuality out of his pique against the sex, and awakened in his breast desires as unlawful as impure.

Isabel's dress spoke her relative situation — her single attendant, her silent sadness and solitary tears, he thought an explanation of her pecuniary one. Marriage with Lord Lawdere was out of the question, unless it were with some young, rich, accomplished, and beautiful heiress: but to appropriate such a woman as Isabel to himself, was worth some trouble; and Lord Lawdere thought too well of himself to doubt of success: but the difficulty was how to get at her — she seldom came on deck until the shades c

evening warned his lordship it was near the hour of dinner; and had he been willing to forego the grand business of his existence, eating, still his shattered frame forbid exposure at such an hour.

His first resource was the servant, but this proved quite fruitless. Kitty neither understood nods nor winks, and to hints and little flatteries was perfectly insensible. If he called her a sweet girl, or a charming creature, Kitty looked grave and walked away. If he spoke of her lady, she looked graver still; and any question was sure to meet a laconic, surprised "sir!" as its only answer.

The man of genius is never at a loss: — in this dilemma his sapient lordship took the road that frequently leads direct to a mother's heart, and by flattery, coaxing, and sweetmeats, soon made acquaintance with the artless children.

From Clara he learnt enough to make him perfectly *au fait* of Isabel and her misfortunes. It was not possible to live

in the *Calcutta world* without hearing of, and occasionally seeing, the beautiful talented Mrs. Escott ; but it was not so easy to recognise her in the afflicted, reserved widow. From Clara, however, and from recollected flying reports, he learnt all that was necessary for his purpose, and rejoiced to think that where the gallant young Tredegare had failed he should triumph.

The mild, but determined rejection, all his fond advances met from the little Cecilia, in some degree disconcerted his plans ; and the return of his necklace from the haughty and offended Clara, still more so.

“ I did not,” said the spirited girl, “ tell my mamma that you dared to say you loved beautiful ladies, because I was ashamed to repeat such things ; and an old gentleman, as you are, should be ashamed to say them.”

Lord Lawdere was provoked the more because Mrs. Clarkson stood by, who

was both very young and very pretty, and yet had not been honoured by his lordship's notice.

He said something about rude children, but Clara disappeared, only stopping as she passed Mrs. Clarkson's infant to kiss him, and say, "there, dear little boy, take that, and grow up a good man, not a naughty swearing lord; grow like my good Colonel Delville, or perhaps like your own papa. I don't know how good he may be, but do not spoil young ladies by dressing them like dolls."

Mrs. Clarkson smilingly thanked her for her good advice, and Clara ran to read with her sister.

The next day, as Isabel was performing the duty of preceptress to her three girls, while her boy amused himself on the floor, the cabin door suddenly opened, and Mrs. Clarkson's servant came running in, exclaiming — "Do pray, madam, for pity's sake, come to my

lady ; the baby is, I believe, dying, and my poor master not much better — oh ! do, do come.”

Isabel hastily followed the servant, and found Mrs. Clarkson, with her infant in a convulsive fit lying on her knees ; her husband vainly striving to sooth the mother and restore the babe.

Recent experience had taught Isabel wisdom in such cases. She quietly took the little sufferer from its parent, and placing it in a proper position, stript off its dress and immersed it in a tepid bath : — by this, and other simple methods, the infant was speedily restored.

Isabel, with something of her former energy, then made enquiries into the child’s general health — produced her own well-stored medicine chest — gave what she thought proper — made some alteration in its dress — advised others in its food — then soothed it into a sound sleep — placed it in the little cot, and

gracefully turned to bid its parents good evening, but gratitude and respect interposed.

Mrs. Clarkson had regarded her prompt and collected actions and directions with delighted admiration, and could now have knelt to her as to a being of another world. With tearful eyes and a trembling voice she uttered her heartfelt thanks and entreaties that Isabel would spend the remainder of the day with them.

Captain Clarkson repeated the request, adding, (as he retained her hand,) “it would be an act of mercy in you to see us sometimes. My poor trembling Maria would, perhaps, learn fortitude from you, and arm her mind to meet evils with less poignancy of feeling. Do pray add to the practical lesson you have just given, that of your kind and judicious advice.”

“You know not what you ask,” replied Isabel, “nor how inadequate the

instrument you would employ. I need more to be taught fortitude than to teach it — need more to learn to meet trials than to instruct another. But yonder lies a friend that will instruct us all if we humbly and faithfully seek instruction from it;" pointing to a handsome folio bible that lay open on the table.

"If," returned the Captain, "you are a lover of that book, we must know each other better — the afflicted should not shun an afflicted brother, even though a weaker Christian."

"The cords of suffering draw close," said Isabel; "it is long since I have seen a face it was possible to avoid, but you hold out a strong inducement. I will return in the evening, after my darlings are sleeping, and visit my little friend here; at present I must leave you — farewell."

At this moment Lord Lawdere appeared at the door; he came, he said, to enquire for the infant and its mother,

“and,” continued he, addressing Isabel, who could not, while his lordship filled the door, find her way out, “to apologise, Mrs. Escott, for the liberty I took in venturing to offer your heavenly daughter a trifling present, for which I was sufficiently punished by the spirited manner in which the little beauty returned it.”

Isabel slightly bowed, and would have passed on. “But,” his lordship continued, contriving to obstruct the door-way, “will you honour me, dear madam, by allowing me to present each of your angels with some memorial of my gratitude, for their charitable attention and kindness to a *solitaire*.”

Finding herself obliged to speak, Isabel coolly replied, “My children are not allowed to wear ornaments, or to receive presents. I will thank you to allow me to pass.”

Under all circumstances Isabel was formed to be obeyed: this even Lord

Lawdere felt, as he politely moved to let her pass, wondering what had happened to his speech. He continued to linger some time after Isabel had departed, hoping to receive some encouragement to repeat his visits, and by that means obtain a more frequent sight of the woman he would have persuaded himself it was impossible longer to live without; but he was disappointed. To Captain and Mrs. Clarkson no visiter could be less welcome. Feeling with certainty the slow approach of death, Captain Clarkson anxiously strove to prepare himself and his gentle wife for the dread event; but this was not to be done by the introduction of such an acquaintance as Lord Lawdere. Uniformly polite, the Clarksons were so now—but cool, distant, and retiring; and his lordship made a parting bow, without having advanced a step in their good graces.

Isabel returned in the evening, and

found so much of the Christian spirit — so much humility, mingled with confidence — such a certain looking forward to a blissful immortality — such a perfect obedience and willing resignation to the Divine decrees in Captain Clarkson, and so much meekness, mildness, and shrinking modesty in his young wife, who was yet scarcely twenty, that the affections of her warm heart were strongly drawn toward them.

As she contemplated the delicate, innocent, soft-eyed Maria, just on the point to lose her stay, support, and children's father, her eyes filled with tears, and a recollection of her own stript, bereaved state, was necessary, to prevent her taking the mother and children to her bosom, and promising them protection, friendship, and provision.

The recollection was followed by a sigh so deep, and an expression of countenance so expressive of what passed within, that, replying to it, Captain Clark-

son took her hand in his, as he said with cheerfulness, " I would, if possible, before I leave my Maria for ever, bespeak for her the friendship of some firmer, stronger mind : in you, Mrs. Escott, these qualities appear conspicuous; dare I ask your advice and countenance for my inexperienced, tender Maria."

The tears that trembled in Isabel's eyes, flowed over her cheeks as she replied, " Believe me, Captain, no improper feeling makes me decline your flattering proposal; but needing advice myself, still mourning, perhaps sinfully so, my drear loss, but a new convert to the truths of Christianity, and ill acquainted with their influence, I am unqualified to act a Mentor's part. My imperfect petitions shall be yours and hers; and during our voyage give me your assistance, help to confirm me in the paths of truth, and haply your sweet Maria may teach me more than I can her, or we may mutually improve each other."

The proposition was gratefully received, and from that day a part of every one was spent in reading, conversation, and needle-work, (in which Isabel was making rapid progress.) With the evidently declining Captain and his little family, Isabel's children gained from their society even more advantage than herself: they listened to their friend's instructive discourse, read to him and conversed with him with increasing interest and pleasure. To all Clara's questions and objections he lent a kind and patient attention, pointing out to her an abundance of reasons why she should love God though he had caused her all the evils she enumerated.

Clara was not easily convinced; but she told the Captain he was the most agreeable Christian she had met with, and she liked him better than Colonel Delville, for two things, because he talked to her as if she could understand reason, not like a naughty child that de-

served the rod, and because he was not Ellen's father. To attempt making her think kindly of Ellen, roused every angry passion, and converted the smiling cherub into a very fury ; and Cecilia, who fondly loved both, intreated that no one would offend dear Clara, by speaking of poor dear good Ellen, who loved every body, a request complied with by the little circle.

These were Isabel's blessings during a voyage of four months ; but to counter-balance them, she endured from Lord Lawdere a persecution of the most cruel kind, especially to a mind so finely set as that of Isabel ; it was the subject of all others that wounded, humiliated, degraded her, in her own eyes, beyond every thing that can be described.

By means of Lieutenant Hudson, to whom Isabel, prompted by humanity, had shown some civility in their occasional rencontres, Lord Lawdere contrived to meet and join Isabel in her walks on the

deck, which she now took earlier than heretofore. Time was precious, and the amorous Lord made the best use he could of it. For a while Isabel, though annoyed by him, had no suspicion of his designs; she had not yet lost all pride and self-sufficiency, even experience had not taught her to think it possible that Lord Lawdere could dare presume to lift an eye of illicit love to her; but she was doomed to be convinced and humbled.

Lord Lawdere with but little *ménagement* laid open his views, his hopes, and his proposals to the astonished indignant widow. For a few moments, her former spirit and dignity blazed forth, as she looked contemptuously down on the poor shattered little apology for a man. "Stand aside, miscreant," said she, "ere I so far descend from myself, as to rid society of a nuisance by throwing you into the sea; yet it were a pity to rob the poor earthworm of its due, by giving your bloated pestiferous little body

to the sharks. Go view your sickly countenance, and instead of illicit passion, seek by repentance to prepare yourself for the dread enemy, who even now shakes his scythe over your guilty head, as the last sands are dropping from your glass."

So saying, she passed the almost terrified peer, who dared make no attempt to detain her, lest the enemy she threatened should answer her appeal *in propria persona*. But all Isabel's firmness died with the occasion; reaching her cabin, she threw herself on the bed in an agony indescribable, from which it was long before the tears of her children, and the attentions of her faithful Kitty, could recall her. Nor did it end here, the frequent letters, messages, and personal intrusions of Lord Lawdere, made his base designs well known to their little community; and poor Isabel, driven in agony to her knees, and finding support from God alone, asked *Captain Clarkson*, who now needed firmness, advice, or a friend

more than herself? “ Who now, Maria,” said she, “ would exchange situations with me? yet am I now more worthy of being envied, than when the reigning toast, the flattered beauty of Calcutta.”

Time wore away ; Isabel sustained her fiery trial manfully, and triumphed over her pride, her too sensitive feelings, and her wavering distrust of Providence. Refined, purified, and confirmed in the Christian faith, rising above her fears, and, with a firm eye, fixed on her refuge, Isabel heard the welcome sound of land.

There is in the associations we feel after a long absence, when drawing near the land, the country, the town, or village, that gave us birth, a sense of nearness, of affection, of friendship dearer than words can express ; but if there yet exists in it a *home*, the feeling becomes overpowering to a painful excess : the recollection of all that ever occurred in that home, of all that has happened since we left it, rushes in a moment be-

fore the fancy, and, like a mighty torrent, bears all before it : we then feel,

There is a spot of earth supremely blest,
A dearer sweeter spot than all the rest,
That land our country, and that spot our home."

So felt Isabel : leaning over the side of the deck, straining her tear-dimmed eyes to discover the land that gave her birth, every thing faded before the ecstatic recollection, " it is my home !"

Evening came on, still Isabel retained her position : fixing her eyes on the thickly studded heavens, she apostrophised the spirits of her husband and child, praying that they might be allowed to hover around her as ministering angels. The difference between her situation now and when she left her country with that adored husband, struck painfully on her heart ; yet raising her eyes, she for the first time exclaimed, from her soul, " not my will but Thine be done."

CHAP. VI.

THE reformation visible in the habits of Horace Fitzallen was but as the calm preceding a storm ; for a while, all went smoothly on, but increased expenses brought on increased difficulties ; Horace became the leader of his party in expenses, violence of politics, and infidelity : he was bold, dashing, and determined : his fine abilities, and his still elegant person and deportment, and the fluency and command of language he possessed, gave him a decided superiority over most of the society he mingled in, or, more properly speaking, the first place among them : but this claim to superiority daily grew weaker, and his temper, naturally haughty and violent, became progressively more so. Matilda, mild and

complying, never offered an opinion in opposition to his, or attempted in any way to contradict him. But for this very quality he despised her ; love had never held much dominion over him, and as a companion, Matilda was the worst in the world for a lover of talent, mind or character.

She was easily pleased, and quickly conciliated, but did not possess an atom of decision, or a single idea of her own : for such a woman, Horace could feel no respect ; and as, according to his principles, being his wife, or the mother of his children, gave her no more claim to his affection than any other female, he professed not what he did not feel, nor attempted to conceal that his amours were as numerous as his fancy was changeable. His children held the same light place in his regards ; their being born in wedlock, he contended, was not their merit, and did not entitle them to a higher degree of consideration

than their less fortunate brethren. To their merits, and their talents, alone were they indebted for kindness or respect; but those merits and talents were not worth his attention and time to cultivate. Their mother, he said, was good for nothing else; the only recompense she could make him for her expense and trouble, was to educate and nurse her children faithfully; not that he considered it her duty, but she was incapable of any thing better. The poor children trembled at his violence, and dreaded to hear of his approach. Taught to consider relative duties and affections of no consequence, nor in any degree binding on them, they were naturally careless, insolent, and artful. Afraid of the father, and regardless of the mother, the little republicans gave but poor promise of future excellence, and but little comfort in present attainment.

Thus stood affairs at the time Matilda was smiling, and striving to appear gay and

happy among the young who laughed at, and the old who pitied her. But these dissipations could not long continue; one year served to consume all that St. Aubin left, beside the small estate. Another year produced debts, and debts drew with them difficulties, out of which one only way remained to extricate them; and that could not be done without the consent and signature of Matilda, who for the first time hesitated to act in conformity to her husband's commands. Storm succeeded storm; but Matilda had most faithfully promised her father, in presence of her cousins, never to dispose of the estate, or make any arrangement from it, without the consent of her cousin, Alfred Courtland, who she well knew would not agree to her husband's demands.

Thus situated, Matilda bore the violence and outrageous conduct of Horace, with a greater degree of firmness and fortitude than it was usual with her to evince; but

her fortitude was scarcely equal to the constant calls made upon it, and her old resource, tears, soon became the feeble defence she offered against her husband's importunity.

“ Well, Matilda,” said he, as he was leaving the house one morning, “ do as you think fit, my mind is made up. I am to spend the day with my friend Macdonald; and unless you resolve by my return to cease this whining, and act like a freeborn woman of common sense, faith I will immediately go with Macdonald into the interior, and leave you to whine all your life at leisure; so take your choice.”

“ If by acting like a woman of common sense you mean, enable you to sell this property, you are well aware it is not in my power, without the consent of my cousin; and there is but little reason to expect he will allow me to bring my children to absolute poverty: and indeed Horace, it is wonderful you should wish

to do so ; what is to become of them, under such circumstances ?”

“ Faith, Matilda, they may do as I have done before them. Citizens of the world, free to act and think, they may do well enough, if you do not ruin them by whimpering, and such cursed nonsense as you talk. What the devil is to prevent you getting rid of this trumpery little estate, and put a considerable sum of ready money into my pocket, without consulting that canting English fellow Courtland.”

“ You know I gave my solemn promise to my dear father never to do any thing without his consent, a promise I hope to keep, in reward for his long kindness.”

“ Upon my soul, Matilda, you are growing quite a fool. I have long thought you near to one ; but this beats all. Promises to drivelling old dotards, that in common decency ought to have gone off the stage ten years before, to be held sacred ; why you will be canting

among the saints, and going to church next, I suppose.”

“ Better I had done so long ago; I might then perhaps have enjoyed a clear conscience, which is far from the case now.”

“ Since this fit is upon you, Matilda, make the best of your way to the Courtlands, and either persuade them to be reasonable, or take care of you and your brats; for I will not live with you another day, unless you do as is *your* duty, and *my* will.”

“ *Duty!*” repeated Matilda; but her husband was gone; and after some tears and sighs of ineffectual regret, she half determined to seek her cousin Alfred, and consult with him how to act; when the unlooked for appearance of Agnes Courtland, for the present removed the necessity.

“ I am sorry, my dear Matilda,” said Agnes, “ to hear you have a design of selling this place; be careful what you

do ; recollect that while you hold it, some provision remains, but once gone, all is gone : the produce will vanish quickly, as all the rest has done, and what then will become of you all ?”

“ Indeed, Agnes, I do not know ; all I know is, that I am very miserable. I wish to do well ; but between the desire of obeying my father, doing as my husband desires, and caring for my children, I am torn to pieces. This is certain, mine is a very cruel fate, a very bitter lot, few so bitter.”

“ I believe, Matilda, you have a thorny path ; but a little gentle firmness may perhaps tread down the thorns : and could you but carry your views beyond this transitory scene, even adversity would be sweetened : though I think it your duty to comply with your husband’s desire in all lawful things, I think it is here your superior duty to refuse steadily what will eventually prove his and your

total ruin, as well as that of your children."

"But what am I to do, Agnes; Horace insists that if I do not, he will never after this day see me again; so you see I have scarcely an alternative."

"You will perhaps say I am not a competent judge in such a case, but I am strongly of opinion that it would be far better to let him leave you with a property, than to remain with you and spend it. For years, a separation was your father's first wish; to obtain it, he would have thought any sacrifice easy, and in a certain degree he was perfectly right."

"I don't know that, Agnes, for no one could behave better than Horace did for a year and a half after my father's death, while we had money; but the want of that always irritates him. It would be but kind of Emma, rolling in riches, to assist us a little occasionally; but that nobody seems inclined to do;

it is easy to find fault, and advice costs nothing.”

“ These remarks of yours, Matilda, I am obliged to say are equally unjust and unkind. I would be sorry to make you think worse of your husband than I am sure you do, were it not for your benefit; but I know not how you can speak of a man as behaving well, who indulges in every vice, openly maintains another family, and scoffs at every tie of honour or virtue; or how you can, now that an opportunity appears to offer, hesitate in separating from such a one. Matilda, it is wilful folly in you to adopt his infidel language; you know better, your dying father taught you better, and remember, ‘ he that knoweth the master’s will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.’ Instead of finding fault with Emma, be grateful that one child is snatched from destruction, and happily taught its duty to God and man. I believe you sometimes for-

get that William is your own ; and that if Emma is rich, it is to her husband's industry and her own prudence that the merit is due ; and your situation might have been as good as hers, had your husband and yourself been Christians."

" You are, as usual, Agnes, very severe ; but I do sincerely wish we were Christians, if that would make us happy, for I know but little of it now."

As she said this the door opened, and in rushed several children, boys and girls, *pêle-mêle*, dragging after them a large dirty dog, and a half dead tame monkey.

" Take away these creatures," said their mother, " and put the dog in the kennel, it is your father's, who will be extremely angry if he knows you have untied it."

" What right has he to be angry," replied the eldest boy, " or to take away the liberty of a poor animal ; I wonder how he would like tying up himself, and I have as much right to deprive him of

freedom, as he has to deprive the dog. I choose to untie the creature, prevent me who can."

"Ah," said his sister, "nobody can prevent you now, but if your father were to come home he would, just from the principle of the strongest lording it over the weakest, the same as he ties up the dog."

Miss Courtland told them she wished to speak in private to their mother, and would thank them to retire.

"I am not accustomed to obey," replied the young Horace boldly, "and shall not go yet; but there are other rooms, and I have no desire to hear your secrets, so you may retire if you choose."

"Nor I," added one of the girls, "so I shall stay here and dress pug."

Miss Courtland with great kindness strove to point out to the young group the wickedness and impropriety of such conduct; but finding it made no impression, she represented it as unbecoming their situation in life, unlike the children

of a gentleman. In this she was interrupted by a contemptuous laugh from the whole set.

“ A gentleman ! ” repeated Horace, “ open one of my veins, and one of the poorest lads in the city, and see if there be any difference in the blood ; none at all : nor can I live a moment longer, or walk on my head, or fly in the air, or live without food, any more than he can : where then is the difference ? Only here ; he is made to obey, and I never was, never will, therefore preach no more to me.”

“ And who is it, Horace, that formed you so alike, that restrains your powers, and gives you the strength and faculties you possess.”

“ Why there we shall not agree ; you will say it was God, and read me a long lecture of nonsense, as my aunt did the other day : now I say it was nature and chance, and my reasoning is better than yours.”

At this moment the monkey, who had got away from his tormenting mistress, revenged himself by biting the hand of Horace that hung down : turning quickly round, he raised the other hand to punish the offender, but suddenly dropping it, “ No ! ” he exclaimed, “ I will not add to the number of tyrants ; thou wert created free, poor pug, and I can better bear a bite, than thee the loss of liberty. Bessy, give your victim food, or I will give it freedom to range for itself.”

So saying, he left the room with as little ceremony as he had entered it, followed by the whole group.

“ What a mind are you neglecting in that boy,” said Miss Courtland, turning to Matilda ; “ there are materials to form just what you should wish, thrown away, or suffered to run to waste,—choked with weeds : that boy would repay your care if you allowed him : indeed, Matilda, you are your own enemy in not teaching your children affectionate obedience.”

“ You talk without knowing, Agnes : I assure you they are all very fond of me ; but I should be sorry to see their energies cramped by a low servile spirit of obedience : their father considers all human beings on an equal footing, and will not allow his children to be treated as insensible fools, or drivelling idiots ; they are very spirited, but I see few children like them, and am very well satisfied.”

Seeing it was not possible to convince or improve her cousin, Miss Courtland rose to take leave. “ But tell me before you go, Agnes,” said Matilda, “ do you think Alfred will consent to the estate being sold, since it is the only way to keep Horace with me and his children, who he cares no more about than if they were so many tame rabbits, and will, I dare say, feel no regret at never seeing them again.”

“ In that case, your loss will not be great ; but I cannot answer for my bro-

ther; you had better see him yourself, he will at all events give you his best advice."

"I hate asking him; you, Agnes, can do it just as well, or Harriet; though Harriet seems to have forgotten the friendship she once professed, since she is become Lady Courtland."

"Harriet would feel happy in doing you or any one else a friendship; and you, Matilda, of all people have the least cause to complain of her forgetfulness. But I fear ingratitude is the natural weed of the unawakened heart and uncultivated mind; in this case, neither she nor I can assist you, it is a business you alone can manage, farewell."

Matilda spent that and many succeeding days in indecision; her husband did not return, and she began to fancy he had indeed deserted them; when a letter from him, saying he had found a purchaser, and settled the terms of sale for the estate, recalled her to a

sense of her situation. Horace concluded his letter by saying, that he should be with her in a few days, and expected no more opposition to what *must* and *should* be done. If this be the case, thought Matilda, it is useless to ask Alfred any thing about it ; since he cannot prevent me, why should I subject myself to affront. My duties are certainly stronger towards a living husband, than a dead father : yet my poor children, what will become of them.

This reflection was followed by a shower of tears, that were interrupted by her eldest daughter demanding what people meant by mortgaging their property. The daughter of an English family, who had lately come over, had been telling her a long story about her father being ruined by mortgaging his estate in England. Matilda knew but little more than her daughter of the subject ; but Bessy's enquiries and information gave birth to a train of ideas, that ended in a determi-

nation to seek Mr. Hammond, and ask of him to advance a sum of money on the estate, sufficient to remove their present difficulties; hoping, by so doing, to prevent its sale, and appease her husband.

John Hammond was among the excellent of the earth; warm-hearted, but temperate; prudent, yet generous; feeling, but not weak; steady and cool in his judgment, warm and lively in his disposition. The brother of his wife had a sort of claim to his services, independent of the desire he had always felt to assist Horace. Thus Matilda did not pour her tale of sorrow into marble ears; he felt for her distresses, and expressed these feelings in terms that drew from Matilda all the concealed affliction of her half-broken heart.

“Come with me,” said John Hammond, “and we will see for Emma, and hear what she says to thy request. I would not shut my heart to thy wants,

but the sum is large, and my family not small ; however, we will consult my good Emma."

Matilda dreaded this consultation more than she dared to express, and met the neat and quiet Emma with feelings of the most painful anxiety. Mr. Hammond looked from one to the other, and his eyes rested on Emma with an expression of grateful love, that quickly found its way to her satisfied heart. Few contrasts could be stronger than that presented by the modest neat attire, the composed and cheerful countenance, the mild benignant manners of Emma, the quiet unostentatious grandeur of every thing around her ; and the neglected finery of Matilda's dress, her anxious care-worn countenance, and the unsettled discontent that visibly reigned within. The reflection, " such a home as this might have been mine, had my husband conducted himself properly," deepened the chagrin and mortification

of Matilda ; while the recollection, “such as are Matilda and Horace should I have been, but for superintending grace and mercy,” pressed on Emma’s heart with feelings of unbounded gratitude.

To the business of this meeting Emma offered some demur ; but the aforesaid recollection softened it into a very slight objection, ending with “Thou art by far the best and most proper judge of what thou oughtest to do ; but do not let Horace Fitzallen, being my brother, influence thee to act in opposition to th judgment : thou canst not be unjust, and I shall never think thee unkind.”

“I believe thee, Emma ; but if a kind Providence has so blessed my labours as to enable me to assist thy brother without injury to our children, thou wilt not object to my indulging the inclination I feel to do so.”

“I shall not object to any thing thou wishest to do, my dear ; but I wish the object of thy benevolence were more worthy of thee.”

Matilda sighed bitterly, as the modern philosopher and the Christian presented themselves to her view ; and an ungenerous feeling of envy towards Emma stifled the rising gratitude of her heart. Matilda had not learnt to examine herself ; she could see her husband's faults, and envy her sister's happiness, without recollecting that she was acquainted with those faults before her marriage, and partook largely of them ; or that she had never sought or deserved that domestic happiness, which made Emma's house a paradise. "What ye sow, that shall ye reap." She had sown in folly and inconsiderate self-will ; and her harvest must naturally be tares, choking weeds, and tears of regret ; particularly as no after-prudence, on either side, corrected the folly of life's early day.

John Hammond was no cold friend ; he did all that Emma requested, and more : for a situation of considerable emolument and trifling employ just then falling vacant,

he exerted himself to procure it for Horace; who at his return, though disappointed in the sum he expected to obtain, *graciously condescended to accept* the double favour from his old, but hated acquaintance, John Hammond. Their friends now hoped to see them improve, and in the enjoyment of rational happiness, to drop the pursuit of its shadow in the tangled and chimerical paths of democracy and infidelity.

As Matilda's family still increased, she was persuaded to engage a governess to assist in their education; and an immediate enquiry was set on foot, *for a lady free from all prejudice*. One was shortly found, so perfectly free from *prejudice*, that in three months she had commenced an amour with the *enlightened* republican father of her pupils, which was carried on, without attention to common decency or common humanity, in the face of mother and children. Shocked and disgusted, the few who had hitherto noticed them among the respectable part of the

world now withdrew; and even Miss Courtland and Emma no longer did more than occasionally, see the unhappy wife and children at their own houses. A few short months put a period to the transient *penchant*, and the residence of a governess in the disorderly family. But its effects on the young minds of the little Fitzallens was deep and lasting; teaching them to think lightly of vice, and pay no regard to the opinions, direction, or commands of either parent, the young Horace, bold and daring, would assert his own right of judging, his equality, and often his superiority to his father, with spirit, casuistry, and strong ability.

The situation in which his father was placed, was one that gave him a considerable degree of naval information, and early determined his choice in favour of a profession, in which his dauntless courage, and fearless boldness, promised certain success. With a degree of tyranny, natural to the pro-

fessed lover of equality, Horace opposed his son's inclinations; but opposition only added determination to the will, and produced threats of proud defiance, and sallies of youthful haughty insolence, which were at last ended by the boy eloping and entering the American navy as a common sailor. The maternal feelings of Matilda were in alarm for her darling boy, the danger and hardships of whose life increased the miseries of her own. Not a gust of wind that blew, or a peal of thunder that rattled over her head, but filled her with new terrors, and planted new daggers in a heart already deeply lacerated.

Fitzallen's conduct and attention to the duties of his situation had both been so bad, that nothing kept him in it but respect for Alfred Courtland and Mr. Hammond, who were both interested for him; but even this was insufficient to counterbalance his language and behaviour on his son's elopement.

Every opprobrious epithet that could be thrown on the navy and its conductors was plentifully bestowed; and the persons engaged about the public office in which he was, were insolently accused of having beguiled a *gentleman's* son to the lowest situation of republican villainy.

This was unbearable; and Horace was disgracefully deprived of a situation, whose emoluments would have enabled him to provide respectably for his large family. This circumstance did not tend to ameliorate his temper, or amend his heart: and poverty soon staring them in the face, he terrified the subdued Matilda into giving him the desired signature; and then, regardless of Mr. Howard's claim, fraudulently contrived, in that land of liberty, to sell what was not his own, and leave his family without a roof to cover them, which in a few months became literally the case.

One vice leads to another; and

Horace, who had always discovered an inclination for gambling, now joined a set, and in despair did mad things, that no fortune could stand. From one degree to another, the wretched Matilda and her children were reduced to abject poverty, homeless, pennyless, and almost friendless.

In this condition Matilda was again about to become a mother; Harriet Courtland heard of her wretched state with tearful eyes; turned them on her own babes, sweetly sleeping, then on the many comforts prepared for her expected confinement, and raising them in swimming compassion to her husband's face, said, 'she is a mother, sick, and deserted, my dear Alfred; your cousin, and my fellow creature; and *who made me to differ?*'"

The appeal was understood and acknowledged: Alfred pressed his wife to his bosom, and promised protection to Matilda. The same evening saw her comfortably settled in a cottage on Al-

fred's now far-spreading lands, and amply supplied with every necessary, by the provident care of Agnes and Harriet.

For a few weeks Matilda felt almost happy: to be the quiet possessor of a convenient cottage, free from embarrassment, and without fear for the morrow, were blessings with which she had lately been unacquainted, and for which she was not ungrateful. Of Horace she saw but little; he appeared pleased to find his family comfortable; was kind in his manner toward them, but made no enquiry as to how they procured the means of subsistence, or what their resources were.

Soon after coming there Matilda gave birth to another girl, on the same day that Harriet's first son was born.

"You look so delighted with your babe," said Agnes two days after, "that I could almost envy you the pleasure of watching over a thing that will love you in return, and at some future day become

your companion and friend. I have been visiting poor Matilda, who regards one of the loveliest children in the world as an additional care — a cumbrous weight on her hands she would gladly be freed from. Alas! how widely different are your situations and feelings: — your husband hanging over you and his infant with delighted tenderness; hers, careless of both, and not acquainted with the birth of the last pitiable little innocent.”

“ I hope ever to feel grateful for my abundant blessings,” replied Harriet; “ all of which I owe to you, my dear Agnes, and your inestimable brother. When first I saw you, Matilda was far less affected with the mania of pretended philosophy than myself, and I owe her no small obligation for introducing me to friends, who, by precept and example, led my steps from the thorny wilderness of error into the narrow path of truth, and richly rewarded my attachment, by taking to their pure bosoms, and admit-

ting to their affections the improved, but still faulty object of their cares."

" Silence, my sweet sister, such grateful flattery is dangerous, even from lips we fondly love. It is the happiness of our lives to have found and attached you to us. But I have a little scheme in my head that needs your approbation ; what think you of my begging this little unwelcome stranger of Matilda, and making it my own, nursing, instructing, and rearing it for Heaven."

" Say, my darling Agnes ! that it is a thought worthy of your own pure heart. Go, dear sister, snatch the little unfortunate from misery and destruction, and rest assured you will be laying up for yourself a store of future happiness, that will prove your abundant and rich reward."

Matilda gladly complied with the request of Agnes, and the infant Mary, was transplanted from the sterile soil of her mother's enforced regards, to the

overflowing, well-cultivated garden of a religious heart, and in Agnes Courtland found that maternal, ever watchful affection, which is necessary to the forming a young untaught mind.

CHAP. VII.

ISABEL took leave of her *compagnons du voyage* with widely differing feelings — from the Clarksons, as for eternity, where she felt a certain hope of meeting them in blessedness : it was a bourne to which every day sensibly conducted the Captain, and which he contemplated without a single wish to retard his advancement towards it.

Maria and her children would have sufficient to protect them from poverty, and too little to expose them to the dangers of high and fashionable life; he hoped to place her in the hands of her respectable father, and then close his eyes on human life, and all its vicissitudes.

Isabel wept on leaving them, for to them she owed the comfort of a refuge from her cruel pursuer Lord

Lawdere, and the strengthening and establishment of her religious faith : but the joy of freedom from Lord Lawdere, and the happiness of again being at home in a few hours, chased her tears, and filled her bosom with hopes, —delightful anticipations. Passing along the road, every object she met was like an old acquaintance —every house was a memento of times long past, and brought back recollections of circumstances and persons now faded in every memory but her own. At the turnpikes Isabel fancied she ought to be remembered, and in one instance, where she recognised a face of former days at the carriage window, it was with difficulty she refrained from accosting the old man as an acquaintance, and enquiring for her father ; but the reflection that it was six miles from Fitzallen, and that her father seldom left home, arrested the enquiry and salutation. To the delighted children's numerous questions she replied

with maternal pleasure, described for them minutely the house, grounds, furniture, and pictures, and dwelt with fond delay on the portrait she drew of their venerable grandsire, the surprise he would experience, the satisfaction she should have in presenting her little group to him, and the pleasure they would enjoy in gilding the evening of his days by attentive kindness.

When the carriage stopt at the lodge, Isabel's feelings condemned her to trembling silence : she was a little surprised by the appearance of a young man as porter, but thought in the years she had been absent, many changes might have taken place, and her old friend might perhaps be dead. At the Gothic arch, through which Isabel had last passed in the shades of evening an alarmed fugitive, were standing several lacqueys in gay unknown liveries : her heart beat almost audibly ; but Eliza's oft repeated question of " Are these my grand-papa's footmen ? "

remained unanswered. As the post-chaise stopped before her paternal abode, a thick film spread over her eyes, her head became giddy, and leaning back, she waited with sick anxiety the opening of the carriage door.

A sort of parley at the hall-door called back her senses, and letting down the glass, she bid Clara enquire the cause.

Kitty came to the carriage, "I do not understand them, ma'am," said she, "they say you are mistaken, and that we should not have come here."

Isabel recovered a little; "I see," she replied, "they are all new servants, open the door, I will go in and find my father."

The post-boy obeyed, and Isabel with trembling limbs, and a daughter on each side, ascended the steps, and crossed the hall of her father's house: her temples throbbed violently as she hastily mounted the stairs.

“ Your name, madam,” said a servant on the top of the stairs.

“ It is unnecessary,” replied Isabel, laying her hand on the lock of her father’s library door.

“ Pardon me, madam, not there, this way, if you please ;” said the man, at the same time throwing open the folding doors of an adjoining apartment. Isabel entered, and throwing herself on a sofa, drew several long breaths, then enquired “ Is Sir William Fitzallen at home ?”

The man stared, and repeated, “ Sir William who ! madam ?”

“ Sir William Fitzallen, my grand-papa,” said Clara.

“ Here is some mistake, madam,” said the man ; “ but I will send the butler.” But before the butler arrived the door opened from Sir William’s library, and an immensely fine lady, leaning on the arm of a tall fashionable-looking man, entered the room. At sight of Isabel both started, and the lady requested

to know to whom she was indebted for the honour of a visit.

Isabel, under every circumstance dignified and commanding, by a powerful effort recovering her composure, raised the crape veil that covered her pale and beautiful face as she replied in a tone of deep feeling, "My name to you, madam, would be uninteresting; until this moment I supposed myself the mistress of this mansion, for centuries the property and seat of my noble family: time levels distinction; you appear now to command where I was obeyed, when you fled your father's cabin for a life more congenial to your taste, than herding sheep and hoeing potatoes: the unravelling of the mystery I am yet to learn. If my respectable father is numbered with his predecessors, in my brother's name I would claim Fitzallen as my own."

"The woman is mad," screamed the lady; "do, pray, Lord Henry, ring and enquire why the people let them in."

“How dare you speak thus to my mamma,” said the enraged Clara; “it is my grand-papa we came to visit, not such a bold person as you.”

“You would do well,” said Lord Henry, raising his glass with perfect *non-chalance* to the face of Isabel, “to make yourself a little more *au fait* of the families you intrude into, and your tale a little better; though, ’pon honour, you have a good tragedy face, and a devilish fine figure of your own. What did you say your name was?”

At this moment Mr. Halloran the butler made his appearance, assuring his lord the lady had made a mistake that a few moments would clear up.

“Is there a person called O’Neil residing on the estate?” demanded Isabel of the butler.

“Yes, ma’am, and with him you will find Sir William. This house is now the property of my lord. I am sorry

such a mistake should have occurred, but —”

“ Do you know the woman ?” interrupted the lady.

The servant did not reply, but his lordship softly sighed, “ Do not agitate yourself, my dear Margaretta.”

“ Perhaps he does not,” said Isabel, turning round, “ though I do him ; but you, Peggy Donegal, cannot have forgotten me, you have too often run barefoot to open the park gate for my father’s carriage : and you, Lord Henry D’Arcy, may remember Isabel Fitzallen without any great effort of memory. Alas, poor souls ! I do not envy you ; my condition may be bad, but yours is dreadful.”

“ Insolence !” vociferated the fine lady, “ turn her out, Halloran, this instant : if that poor old idiot at O’Neil’s is her father, she has little to boast of, the Lord knows.”

“ *Tenez vous tranquille, ma belle ange,*” drawled Lord Henry, deliberately view-

ing Isabel through his glass ; “ *en vérité mais vous êtes très belle ma charmante veuve, et la maison est assez large pour les tout deux ; restez ici, madame, and administer to my felicity and your own.*”

Isabel took her children’s hands, — “ Hasten, my darlings, from the contagious breath of vice, it is another blow, thus to find the house of your predecessors become a brothel,—but we now know to suffer.” So saying she hastened down the stairs, and into her chaise.

The sulkypost-boy, shivering in a violent storm of rain, asked “ where he should drive?” Isabel could not reply; but Cecilia beckoning a servant, sweetly requested directions to Mr. O’Neil’s : and the man, an Irish lad, gave it with a blessing on her *swate* face.

The rain fell in torrents, and the wind beat through the shattered Irish chaise with a piercing chillness, that made the children cling to their heart-struck mo-

ther, who folding her arms around them, and raising her eyes to Heaven, ejaculated, " They are thine, oh Father, as much as mine; thou wilt not, canst not desert them. Give them food and raiment, of this world's good I ask no more."

" And that, my mamma," said the weeping Cecilia, " very plain, very simple, only enriched by grateful hearts."

Clara uttered with a deep sigh her oft repeated exclamation, " Oh, my father! that I were with you."

It was dark, cold, and rainy, when the jaded horses stopped before the low-roofed abode of O'Neil. After knocking several times at the door, he appeared with a lanthorn in his hand, and demanded who had disturbed him. Years had not improved him: the face Isabel had last seen, strongly marked with art and cunning, was now shrunk into the deep lines and contracted brow of miserly covetousness. She almost

trembled at his meagre aspect, and dreaded being refused even the poor shelter from the storm that raged without which his confined home afforded. Happily all within was peaceful, and Isabel discovered herself with so much sweetness and humility, that even avarice was charmed by the music of her sweetly modulated voice. The story of her misfortune had never reached O'Neil. She came from the East, and therefore ought to be rich: that she was a widow, with little attendance, he saw; but from her altered manner, was induced to take all chances, and offer the best accommodation in his power. Isabel gratefully accepted it, and learning her father was asleep, sought the same refreshment for herself and children. Folding her fatherless boy to her bosom, she committed her all to the care of the keeper of Israel, and slept soundly on the chaff pallet of her former servant.

Morning came, and with it Isabel's

trembling anxiety to see her father. The words, "that old idiot at O'Neil's," rung in her ears; but driving away apprehension, and arming herself with patient firm dependance on unerring wisdom, she arose, and dressing herself and children, descended the narrow staircase that led to O'Neil's only sitting room: he was preparing to breakfast with his wife, who rising, hoped Mrs. Escott was well, and had rested comfortably, adding, "it is not myself that would be living in the little house here, but O'Neil himself loves better the money than the good house and servants, so it's here we must be."

"And very good it is, I'm thinking," replied the husband; "it would be well for the maister himself to be getting such an one; but the jewel, Mrs. Escott, now she's come here, will be finding one for him just now, a nate gentale one too."

"Is my father not yet up?" asked Isabel.

“The ould maister, God keep him, it is jist much the same whether it is in bed or up he is, for it’s little he’ll be doing any way,” replied O’Neil.

“Where shall I find my father?” said Isabel, rising, “I wish much to see him.”

“Och, then, he’ll be coming here jist now,” returned the wife, “jist be asy, dear, and get your breakfast in pase.”

During this reply O’Neil had quitted the house, and his wife was soon too busy to talk; but Isabel could not be *asy*, and gave her children their plain meal with unsteady hands and an anxious heart.

“Come with me, mamma,” whispered Clara, “I want to show you something, but do not be distressed when you see it.”

“What is it, my sweet girl?” said her mother, as they crossed a sort of dirty poultry yard.

“It is a poor man; but come, mamma, and see him, for he will not speak to me.”

Isabel followed the child into a damp

low-roofed out-house, on the earthen floor of which was a wretched heap of rags and straw, where sat a poor miserable looking old man, with his white head supported on a thin long hand that appeared scarcely strong enough to support itself. Isabel's heart misgave her, as Clara, taking the disengaged hand, said, "Look up, poor man, and speak to my mamma, she will do you good, for nobody is so kind : do pray speak to him, dear mamma."

"Stand aside, my child," said the mother, as leaning forward she took his hand, and kneeling before him, intreated in her own subduing tones that he would raise his head and speak to her. With a sort of recollective start, the old man raised his head, and for a moment fixed an unsettled eye on Isabel, who uttering a deep groan, clasped him in her arms, as she exclaimed, "My father! oh! my father!"

Clara quickly caught the sound, and

kissing his hand, she cried, " Dear, dear grand-papa, this comes of that horrid O'Neil, and those shameless people at Fitzallen ; but we will take you from them, and nurse you into health and comfort."

The child's words recalled her mother's stunned senses to a recollection of their situation : " this," said she, " is severe indeed ; oh ! how much does this proud rebel heart require to bring it completely humble : look up, my beloved father, speak to me, see your child, your Isabel ; do you not know me ? Alas ! we are both sadly altered, both strongly paint the uncertainty of all things human."

There was a something in the voice of Isabel that appeared faintly to awaken recollection, but it died away almost instantly, and the head again sunk on her shoulder in silent forgetfulness.

From a contemplation of his altered countenance, Isabel was aroused by the

sudden entrance of Mrs. O'Neil, accompanied by Cecilia. She began something like an apology for the poor accommodations of the Baronet, and said she used to keep him in a *nate* chamber, but *whin her frinds* came to see her, she wanted the room, and the maister was jist as asy sleeping here.

“But how,” said Isabel, “can you sleep quietly on that bed his munificence provided you, and know him to be destitute of even common necessities; it is not age that has whitened this head, bowed this once athletic frame, and reduced to imbecility those fine faculties, for he is yet younger than you are, and many years younger than your cruel husband.”

“Truth for ye, Mrs. Escott; but ye can talk well, and 'tis hard for them that can neither talk nor do.”

Without noticing this remark, Isabel, assisted by her children, raised Sir William from his wretched bed, and led him.

across the yard, though he walked with difficulty and apparent reluctance.

“Faith, then,” said Mrs. O’Neil, “but ye had better let him be, for it’s walking itself he hates worse nor any thing.”

“But,” asked Isabel, “how came my father to be living with you, and in a condition so reduced?”

“Truth for ye, then, jewel; but ye may well ask that same, and the cratur’s of childer that we have; but O’Neil’s heart melted whin he seed the ould soul widout a house, so he said, the maister, God bless him, Shelah, shall not be wanting a home whin I live, for ’tis here he’ll find it, so here he’s bin staying more than the two years or full that same.”

O’Neil just now came in from the farm, and began to complain that all his care and labour did not keep things together, or ensure prosperity; but nothing in this life was certain.

“The father of ye, Mrs. Escott, could

tell ye that, think of that ould spalpeen the abbé, that jist tuck himself off to another family, widout so much as God bless ye, Sir William, so laving him to starve ; but that I brought him in here, and let him have jist what he likes, and that same's not a great deal, for the ould maister never tuck any thing well after the son of him was drowned."

" He must, indeed," said Isabel, " have suffered dreadfully. But why, O'Neil, did you not let my sister and myself know it ; and how could you cruelly put him to sleep in such a damp hole : you call him old, think is it not trouble, more than age, which thus bows him down ?"

" Och, then, it's yourself can best answer that, for ye well know it was you that first broke his heart, and 'tis jist kilt he is ever since : sure then it well becomes the like of you to talk of cruelty ; his own childer, all, every one of you, turned heretics, and left the ould soul ;

and this is the thanks ye give me for pitting the bread in the mouth of him."

"There is but too much truth in part of what you say, O'Neil; but you should remember, all you have came from Fitzallen."

"And how came it from there?" interrupted the wife; "but bekase the man O'Neil worked and saved, while all the same of you played and spent. Sure, then, 'tis high enough ye are with your one Sketty for a servant to the whole of ye; but ye'll jist be finding another bed to-night, if you please, for I don't like such ways itself."

"Arrah, Shelah dear, let your tongue be aisy; didn't I manage all myself, and don't I know best what we would be doing? Be aisy then, Shelah dear, can't ye?"

Without any reply to this mortifying colloquy, Isabel enquired to whom Fitzallen now belonged.

“ Sure, then, and wouldn’t ye be knowing it is Lord Henry D’Arcy that keeps it.”

“ Has he purchased it ?”

“ It’s jist that same he is now doing; for does he not wish to keep it jist to be coming to sometimes in the summer, bekase he likes it better than the house of the brother of him.”

“ And who, O’Neil, is he making the purchase of ?”

“ Of who then would he be making it, but of the right owner ?”

“ My poor father, I presume, is the right owner; but in his unhappy state he cannot transact any business : — of course, cannot sell Fitzallen.”

“ True for ye that, if Fitzallen was the maister’s; but wouldn’t you know all about it ?”

“ All about what, O’Neil ?”

“ Sure, then, would the maister be sitting there with the swate childer

smoothing the white head of him, if Fitzallen was his : sure, dear, you must know better than that."

"To whom, then, does it belong?" asked Isabel, in amazement.

"To who would it belong but jist to myself; and money enough, and trouble it was enough too, that the ould place cost me, and poor enough I'll be wid it all."

"Poor enough, indeed!" ejaculated Isabel, "with all thy ill-gotten wealth, eating like a canker-worm into thy very soul, — chasing thy visage with deeper furrows than age, — palsyng thy griping hand, — freezing thy old blood, — filling thy dying pillow with sharpest thorns, — and oh, wretched man! sinking thy soul a thousand fathoms deep in the pit of perdition! Poor, indeed! Ah, think not a mistaken blind priest can shrive thy conscience from stains so deep, from crimes so foul! Go, make restitution of thy burning gains; then bow

in dust and ashes before the only Being that hath power to take away the mountains of guilt and sin that press thee lower than the grave. Haste, aged sinner ; for o'er thy hoary head hangs the sword of Eternal Justice, suspended by a single hair : one step more, and the thin hair breaks, and thou art for ever lost. Poor, poor, indeed ! honest beggary were riches compared to thine."

The old man stood trembling before Isabel : all his native and acquired insolence was insufficient to enable him to raise his eyes. The towering figure, the half-raised hand, the pale and lovely face, the dark piercing eyes, shaded by their deep black lashes, the sable dress, and deep solemn tone of Isabel, inspired him with awe, fixed him to the spot, and deprived not only him, but his loquacious wife, of the power of speech and motion.

Turning from them to her only attendant, Isabel continued, — " Kitty, I know not what lies before me. My path ap-

pears particularly narrow and difficult: to tread it with wisdom be now my care. The first step towards doing so, seems to me to be leaving this house; for surely this is the tent in which we are forbidden to dwell. Go then, my good girl, to yonder village, and seek an abode: be careful of nothing but that it be dry and *humble*. Clara, my dear, go with her; and remember, it is a poor cottage for poor people you are seeking."

"I had better go, dear mamma," said Cecilia; "perhaps Clara will not like to go into poor cottages."

"Clara knows her duty, dear Cecy, and will do it," replied the spirited girl. "Stay you and watch dear quiet grand-papa."

"Leave me my boy, Kitty, I will nurse him while you are away."

"No, dear madam, that you cannot: the sweet fellow is heavy and troublesome. I can take him with me better

than you, ma'am, can nurse or stoop to lead him. You must not do such things indeed, ma'am."

"Away, Kitty, with all this delicacy and finery. Give me my boy; and recollect, I must not only nurse, but work to support them all. Go, and on your way pray that I may be instructed to walk this narrow road."

Accompanied by the proud and beautiful little Clara, Kitty set forward, with an aching heart, to seek a lowly cottage for the family she had been accustomed to see the ornament of palaces, and the idols of popular applause.

On an inspection of her father's wardrobe, Isabel found it to correspond with his sleeping accommodations, though she knew from his former habits of extravagant abundance, that had he been honestly dealt by no further supply could have been necessary; but any appeal to the wretches who boasted of

having kept him from starving when his own children all forsook him, was useless.

From the disjointed account of O'Neil and his wife, Isabel learnt that her father had been a debtor to the agent for considerable sums for many years, — that the fine which was last passed on the whole estate reduced its rents to a mere trifle, and O'Neil then rented the whole; but in a very few years the interest of debts claimed by him was more than the income, — he then seized on the property as his own.

Sir William's spirits were much broken; and his mind, never very strong, subdued by trouble, fasting, penitence, and austerity, sunk into second childhood. In this state the abbé left him for a more promising abode; and O'Neil ejected him from the home of his youth — the residence of his forefathers, and, as owner of the land, let it to the first who offered him a fair price; and Lord Henry D'Arcy, just then coming into possession,

of a large fortune, and having taken as an appendage to it the handsome Peggy Donegal, on fashionable terms, became its nominal owner.

O'Neil, who knew his title to it dubious, became very desirous of drawing Lord Henry into a purchase, rightly judging that a sum of money was a more certain possession than an estate so held.

Late experience had given Isabel some knowledge of business, and more of insight into the natural character of man. Hence she was quick-sighted to the avarice and dishonesty of the whole transaction; but at a loss how to act, destitute of money or friends. "Yet not without the latter," thought Isabel: "if the Friend of the friendless be but with me, I can need no other."

During the whole of this melancholy day, the Baronet sat crouching over the slender fire, on a low chair, apparently not quite insensible to the tender kind-

ness of his grandchildren, or their endeavours to interest and amuse him ; but still he spoke not—moved not—wept not. Sometimes, when Isabel hung over him, he would, at the sound of her voice, raise his eyes for a moment to her face ; but the fleeting shade of recollection that met his ear, received no aid from the eyes, and he again sunk into apathy.

The shades of evening were falling fast around them, when Kitty returned. She had succeeded in engaging a cabin, but they could not have it until next day.

During the day Isabel had not tasted food, after her light breakfast. With some difficulty she had obtained from Mrs. O'Neil, who, now she discovered the trunks contained no ingots of gold, no longer thought it necessary to be "*janteel*," a few potatoes and a little skimmed milk for her children and father, the latter of whom, she felt hourly more convinced, suffered from want and ne-

glect ; but her own heart was too full to feel any appetite for such homely food, on the first day of its appearance.

Finding it impracticable to quit their present abode that night, Isabel announced her intention of leaving in the morning, and prepared to put her darlings to rest ; at the same time asking if she could not have another bed for her father.

“ Is it another bed you’d be wanting for the cratur ?” said Mrs. O’Neil, “ augh, then, and I think it is well ye are with the same, when you come to your country widout a skelter in the pocket of ye ; no more bed will the ould maister get here.”

Isabel felt she could not yet submit to such language and insults ; but the sight of Clara’s crimson face and neck, fiery eyes, and quivering lips, arrested the half-uttered sentence of resentful contempt. Rising in dignified silence, she led the enraged child out of the room,

and received on her throbbing bosom the flood of mortified tears that saved her child from worse consequences.

Having gently corrected, and tenderly soothed the little sufferer, she laid them all on their hard pallets, fondly kissed their ruby lips, and returned to seek her father. She met him at the door, following, by a sort of instinct, the cow-herd to his shed.

Isabel took his hand, — “Come this way with me, my dear father.” Again his uplifted eye bore testimony of slight recollection; but there was no correspondent one in the pale widowed face that met his eyes, and with a soft sigh he dropt them again.

The sigh sent a thrill of joy through Isabel’s heart — it was a hope of returning sensibility. Oh, could he but know her, feel her attentions, and tell her he freely forgave her, what joy, what gratitude should she feel!

With thoughts such as these, she

placed him on her own bed, by the side of his sleeping grandson ; and then, spite of Kitty's intreaties that she would ascend the loft prepared for her, wrapped a large cloke around her, and reposed on some sacks of malt that lay in a corner of the room ; but,

Tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep, visited not her eyelids. Busy memory, with retrograde steps, wandered over the last twelve years, and drew from her aching eyes a flood of heartfelt tears.

At an early hour she rose from the comfortless couch : on the two chaff pallets youth and age slept soundly, equally free from anxiety, or a care beyond the present moment.

As Isabel contemplated the sleeping group, the question — “ How shall I support them ? ” thrilled through her bosom with a shivering pang. “ O where will it end ? ” groaned she : “ when will my physician be able to say, ‘ it is enough ? ’ If I had no stay but my long-boasted self

at this drear moment, what would become of me ; for, humanly speaking, to look forward is despair, and to look back madness. But I have a refuge, a sure and firm one, — one that time cannot alter, and misfortune but renders more dear, more valuable — a rock of defence, that O'Neil nor the world shall be able to remove. I know not what, but certain I am that a something will be provided us : “our bread shall be sure, and our water shall not fail.” ”

Turning from the bed, she opened the casement window. The rising sun cast a bright beam on the eastern turrets of Fitzallen—the windows beneath glittered in its rays. The tears started in her eyes — it was the window of that room where her mind had first received the seeds of those poisonous weeds which, cultivated in the same apartment, by the same hand, had since flourished so brilliantly and so baefully.

“ Alas ! ” sighed Isabel, “ my poor mis-

taken governess ! and where, in the wreck of time, art thou ? Has light and truth broken on thy benighted mind ? or art thou gone for ever ?” As her eye fell on the window of what had been her father’s room, she recollected its velvet canopies, its soft down bed, and luxurious state ; and turning from it to the chaff on which he now lay, wrapt in forgetfulness, “ Such,” exclaimed she, “ are the vicissitudes of human life ! Soon a narrower than this shall hold thee ! Who, then, shall be over-anxious for the food that perisheth, since

Man wants so little here below,
Nor wants that little long.”

CHAP. VIII.

THE state of Isabel's finances was not such as would long support her, even in a cabin. She felt a strong desire to consult some person capable of advising her on the subject of Fitzallen ; but where to find a friend she knew not : and to apply to a professional man, with the little information she could give him, seemed but a loss of time and money. Her thoughts sometimes turned towards Captain Clarkson ; " But why," said she, " disturb his dying moments with the concerns of iniquity ? No ; let him retain his tranquillity ; I will never disturb it." If her old friend Lord Dunmore had sought her friendship, Isabel thought she would gladly have opened to him her

heart ; but she could not *ask* it. What right had she to interrupt his felicity, by intruding her cares on him and his happy family ?

These cogitations were followed by a flood of tears, the source of which, or the true cause of her unwillingness to seek Lord Dunmore, Isabel did not examine carefully, or she would have found her old enemy still lurking in a closed recess of her changed heart ; but accident soon brought about the interview she desired.

Close to the cottage Isabel inhabited was a long green lane, just now in its highest beauty : in this lane Kitty frequently walked with the four children, who had already formed an acquaintance with the miserable family of a turf-cutter. — Cecilia was one day, with indefatigable pains, striving to teach a girl much older than herself the Lord's prayer, while Clara was lecturing the rest of the family on the sin of dirt

and idleness, when a gentleman and lady passing by, were attracted by the uncommon beauty and energy of the children.

Stopping to observe them, the elegance and propriety of their language excited further attention. Turning to Eliza, the gentleman asked her name.

“ Eliza Escott.”

“ Escott !” repeated he, as Clara, with an air of offended dignity, turning to her sister, said, “ My dear sister, do you forget yourself? To answer such questions from a stranger !”

The gentleman with a smile replied, “ I stand corrected, Miss Escott : I should have enquired of your servant ; and then, perhaps, as Lord Dunmore, I might have claimed the honour of being an old acquaintance.”

“ And I,” said the lady, “ of being a relation, unless those features disappoint me greatly. Pray will you allow Lady Dunmore to enquire if you are not the

grand-daughters of Sir William Fitz-allen?"

"We are, madam," replied Clara; "but you will oblige me by not asking questions, for we are forbidden to reply to them."

"One question, my lovely girl, I must ask, and as a near relation am entitled to a reply; on what occasion are you thus wearing deep mourning?"

Tears dimmed her bright eyes as she replied, "For that, ma'am, which caused all our sorrow, my dear papa's death."

An exclamation of surprise and grief from Lady Dunmore proved too much for Clara, and she wept and sobbed aloud.

"Hush, dear Clara," said Cecilia, "think of what mamma often tells you, it is selfish to weep for a loss that is our dear papa's eternal gain, and was the will of our heavenly Father."

"I know it," replied Clara, drying her eyes; "but it will be long, Cecy, ere

I shall be as good as mamma and you, or learn to yield without murmuring to such dreadful griefs."

Lady Dunmore regarded the three tearful cherubs with streaming eyes, and folding her arms around them, she pressed them to her bosom, saying, "Tell me not that you are forbidden to reply to my questions, I must see and know your mamma, she can no longer be the Isabel I once knew."

"She is not like what she used to be," returned Cecilia, "but you look good, like Mrs. Delville; if you are, come with us and see mamma, but not if you are like the lady at Fitzallen, and several others we have seen in Ireland."

"She is not like them," replied Lord Dunmore, "and I knew your mamma when no older than you, therefore lead us to her; for *your* mother, I would fain hope, is a Christian, though Isabel Fitzallen was not."

"I will go forward, sir," said Kitty,

“and announce you, for my lady is not able to see every one.”

“Do you think there is a chance she will not see us?” asked Lady Dunmore.

“I don’t know, madam, but I should not like her to be shocked, and strangers you know —”

“Are sometimes troublesome,” interrupted his lordship; “but my good girl, allow me my whim of introducing myself, and rest satisfied we will neither shock nor offend your lady.”

“Are you aware, sir, of the change in her situation?”

“I am aware there must be a great one, but that cannot affect me.”

“Certainly not,” said Clara, “nor my mamma either: she is the same honourable Mrs. Escott now she was when we kept carriages and numberless servants in Madras, before all these horrid things happened.”

The soft blue eye of Cecilia visibly reproved her haughty sister, though she

spoke not, and their new friends regarded them both in astonished silence, until they were at the door of Isabel's lowly cot. On entering, they found Isabel seated at the only table the room afforded; on it lay some coarse brown stuff, from which she had been making dresses for her children; before her lay an open bible. The traces of recent tears stained her pale cheek, and blistered the leaves of her book: but there was a holy resignation, a mild submission, a heavenly calm in her looks, that, added to her general appearance, inspired her visitors with a feeling of respectful pity and silent awe. Time had dealt very kindly with both: the alteration in Lady Dunmore's dress was but trifling, and Isabel instantly recollected them. Coming forward with her usual grace she offered a hand to each; then turning from them, she kissed and blessed each child separately.

“ My dear mamma,” said Clara, “ this lady and gentleman say they are relations,

I hope we have not done wrong in bringing them home ?”

Having satisfied her daughter, she turned to her visitors and again presented her hands : the tears that filled both their eyes accounted for their silence.

Pressing her hand to his lips, Lord Dunmore feelingly said, “ Am I forgiven, dear Mrs. Escott, for my apparent neglect, by declaring that until last evening we did not know you were in Europe, and then could not discover where you were.”

“ Having never felt offended, I have nothing to forgive ; but, perhaps, it is more soothing to a wounded mind to be convinced change of circumstance have not produced contempt or forgetfulness in those it has been accustomed to respect ; though, had that been the case, I had no right to be offended, but should have strove to take it as another draining potion from my good physician.”

“ But why, my dear Isabel, did you

not let me know you were here?" asked Lady Dunmore.

"Because," replied Isabel, "I did not know if I deserved to be your dear Isabel; and misfortunes such as mine seek the shade."

"But now that you do know it, let me hope you will quit this place, and with your sweet family come to us, until you can find a more suitable residence: you must not indeed stay here."

"This residence, my kind Anne, suits best our fallen fortunes: we are the children of no common sorrows: one only thing enables me to support such an accumulation of woes, they are the work of an unerring hand, and to them I owe hope of everlasting peace, when this turbulent scene shall have ended."

"I ask not what these misfortunes are," said Lord Dunmore, "but tell me freely in what way I can be useful to you; and if you can place sufficient confidence in me to open your future

plans, rely on my best advice and sincerest friendship: my Anne's flowing tears are meant to say the same, or perhaps more."

Isabel gratefully thanked him, and with many tears related the occurrences of the past eighteen months, the situation in which she had found her father, and her doubts and hopes as to the sale of the Fitzallen property; "now," continued she, "all I ask of you is, your candid advice what plan to pursue for rescuing Fitzallen from the gripe of villainy, not with any view to my own advantage, but for my brother and his children."

Lord Dunmore entered warmly into her feelings, and promised to give it his cool consideration and active interference; he then joined Lady Dunmore in soliciting Isabel to make his house her home. But this no persuasions could make her consent to: she had already suffered considerably from the imperti-

nent visits of former acquaintance, who, actuated by curiosity, or even worse motives, found their unwelcome way to her humble cottage; and to avoid them, and earn for her family a maintenance, was now her firm determination.

Lady Dunmore hinted at writing to Ellen, and applying to Charles Penn, who still resided in Cork, and thought that jointly a provision might be made that would prevent the necessity of exertion. But this likewise Isabel decidedly refused: independence was all that now remained to her, and that no consideration should make her barter. She would go to England, and in some retired village seek the means of supporting her family.

Her manner was so determined, yet so calm and free from improper feelings; her confidence in the Father of the fatherless so firm, yet so humble; and her reasonings so just, that Lord Dunmore and his affectionate Anne, though they lamented the cause, could no longer oppose her;

but for the affairs in Ireland promised to do all that friendship and industry could effect.

Rising to take leave, Lord Dunmore took the hand of Isabel as he impressively said, " I have known you many years, dear Isabel, and often admired, but never truly respected or fully esteemed you until this day. In your days of prosperity you were brilliant, beautiful, and dangerous ; but now, in your day of adversity, you are —"

" A very faulty creature, my good friend, needing all your prayers and support to stand firmly on my slippery ascent."

They separated with expressions of mutual good will, and Isabel immediately began to make arrangements for leaving Ireland. The world was all before her, but England, from an association of ideas, appeared to claim a preference, or rather to offer the best prospect of an asylum. In this case, Kitty again proved

useful : she was a native of a beautiful part of Gloucestershire, and every thought of repose turned that way : her arguments had their due weight, and the populous village of W— was fixed on as a retreat for the present, a resolution that became each hour more grateful ; for during the few days that intervened, Isabel and her children were become almost objects of curiosity, that it seemed necessary for every one to visit, and her feelings were constantly wounded, beyond description, by the pride of rank, or the insolence of wealth.

There are certainly in some characters of strong and high raised feelings, moments so replete with emotion, that they appear to bear the weight of an age : in such moments we live a whole life, and feel more, than the three score and ten years of an ordinary character will produce. Such to Isabel was the instant when, with her enfeebled father, her four children, one servant, and a very few

guineas, her whole possession, she embarked on board a vessel at Cork, to go by long sea to England, a country in which she had not a friend, not even an acquaintance, and no visible means of support.

With a heart that ached with an intensity unknown to any but the widowed desolate mother, throbbing temples, dry burning eyes, parched quivering lips, and a trembling frame, Isabel pressed her hands closely to her heart as if to still its agony, cast an anxious prayerful look on the helpless group around her, then sinking on the deck, hid her pale face in the neck of her sleeping cherub boy, and strove to cast her care where alone she could hope for relief. The little voyage and subsequent journey were performed in safety, and Isabel entered W—at the close of a lovely day, when the setting sun gave to every surrounding object its last bright golden tints.

“And what brought me here?” asked

Isabel's heart, as she passed the village church : " the hand of Providence," was the spontaneous reply. " Well, be it so," continued she, " I am not my own, and would not chalk out my own path."

Kitty's aunt, the wife of a well-doing plain farmer, received the party with affectionate civility ; she was a sincere simple Christian, a woman of few words, and much benevolent kindness. Of Isabel and her misfortunes she had heard enough to engage her best offices in their service, and all that was necessary to be generally known. But her youth, beauty, humility, and sweetness, soon engaged the matron's warmest affections, and her husband declared he should not care working harder, and living harder, to maintain the four dear children.

" But thank God, John," returned his wife, " there is no need o' that ; and if madam would but be content to stay with us, we should not be a shilling the worse at the year's end."

“Kitty,” said Isabel to her one morning, “I have brought you to your own home and excellent relations, and now, my good girl, accept my best, most grateful thanks for your tender attentions. Had it been possible to have retained any one about me, I would gladly have kept you, but it is not; my intention is to collect a school from the better sort of poor people here, but we must learn to do without a servant. May God bless and reward you liberally.”

“And do you think, ma’am,” returned the weeping girl, “that I have no more gratitude in me, after all you and your friends have done for my mother and me, than to leave you thus: no, ma’am, while we live, we will live together. I can now, thanks to good nursing, live hard and work hard, and by the blessing of God so I will, while these dear babes want it.”

Tears stopped her further utterance ;

taking Eliza on her lap she hid her face on the child's shoulder, and wept aloud.

“ Oh dear,” said Mrs. Thompson, coming into the room, “ what is the matter with you all, so many crying faces ; has any thing fresh happened to vex you, my dear ma'am, I thought your dear face looked cheerful this morning.”

Isabel pressed her hand, but could not reply. “ Tell me, my sweet one,” continued she, kissing Cecilia, “ what is the matter with your mamma ?”

“ Clara will ; I do not know how to describe what ails any of us,” replied Cecilia.

On hearing Clara's relation, Mrs. Thompson applied the corner of her check apron to her eyes as she said, “ I hope there is no sister's child of mine that would not have said the same. I wonder who is best fit to work, those that have always been used to it, or true gentlefolks born ? I am sure, ma'am, I wish, as my husband said to-day, that you

and the sweet babes would make yourselves happy and stay here, we should be glad to work for you all."

"O Father, I thank thee," exclaimed Isabel, raising her hands and eyes to heaven, "thus blessed, thus cared for, shall I ever again dare to indulge a murmuring or a doubtful thought, ever again shed the bitter tear of complaint, or feel aught but gratitude and love."

Then thanking the kind farmer and his wife, she expressed her fixed determination of maintaining herself and family, and explained to them her plan of a school, entreating their candid advice.

"Why, as to that, ma'am," replied Mrs. Thompson, "if so be that you be quite determined on a school, may be I could put you in a surer way: that good man Mr. Raikes have been setting up schools in all the country, and he was here two or three times asking about a serious proper person to undertake one in this large village; but neither he nor

Mr. Wilkins the parson have found any body yet, for 'twas only yesterday that our good old parson was speaking to me about it; so, my dear lady, if you be for a school, why a poor certainty is better than an uncertainty in such a place as this, and John he will go and speak about it, and you may have that I know, and Kitty she can teach them pretty near every thing."

Isabel gladly embraced the offer, and farmer John set off the same day to the benevolent patron of the poor, whose name shall long and truly be revered, and to whom every Christian breast will gladly raise a tribute of gratitude and respect. Farmer John was judicious enough to understand that too much of the gentlewoman would not suit a village charity school; he therefore threw her birth, family, &c. into the shade, and recommended her as a widowed mother, an afflicted daughter, a lowly Christian, and a sensible quiet

woman. Such a recommendation from a man of John's known probity was all-sufficient, and business preventing an immediate personal attendance, the farmer was charged with a letter to the Rev. Henry Wilkins, requesting his immediate attention to the undertaking, and particularly to the matron in question.

“ That was a very good thought of yours, wife,” said John, as he finished the history of his visit ; “ ten to one but I should never have thought of it ; but trust you, Sarah, for remembering what will do people good.”

“ And you, John, for doing it ; ’twas but a small thing to remember what I have heard so much about, but ’twas something like to ride twenty miles to see after it. Well, there, God will bless you, for I am sure you have been a blessing to me, to your children, and to all your neighbourhood. Well I only hope my daughter may but be as fortunate in a husband as I have been, and the first

thing toward it, will be her marrying a Christian."

"And the next," said John, "her copying her mother in all things: but now, my dear, go and meet Mrs. Escott, there she is in the home ground; and tell her, poor thing, all about it; I am sure she sets us a fine example of patience."

Isabel heard the success of her friend's mission with emotions of the purest gratitude, and retired that night with a heart no longer contending with itself, but full to overflowing with the best feelings of Christian hope and resignation. The next morning brought a visit from the village rector; he was a minister worthy of his high vocation, a man now far advanced in the vale of years, living for the sole purpose of enlarging his Master's kingdom; his life was a bright example of the self-denying precepts he taught; in figure and appearance he might have sat for the likeness of St.

Paul; in manner and principle he was the Christian hero, blended with the mild forgiving saint. His first view was calculated to take the affections by surprise, his subsequent, to bind those affections to him and his cause for ever: such was the second Protestant clergyman with whom Isabel conversed, and the *first* she heard preach.

Hitherto the great work had been carried on in her mind, and become the principle of her heart, with very little external aid; beyond the prayerful use of her Bible, and the conversation of her friends the Delvilles, she had not any: but he who can work how he will, and when he will, had chosen for Isabel the severe discipline of deep affliction, and given to her mind, formed for receiving powerful impressions, a firm and decided Christian character, through the medium of her judgment, and the convictions of her soul.

Mr. Wilkins almost started, on being introduced to her as the candidate for teaching a village-school; but a short conversation served to make him as anxious to engage the interesting widow, as she was desirous of accepting his proposals. The beauty and sweetness of her children, the imbecility and helplessness of her father, and their stript, destitute situation, called forth all his commiseration; and the cheerful, humble dependance and willingness to redeem a mis-spent time of the mother and daughter, all his admiration and esteem.

Isabel, on her part, felt as though she could have knelt at his feet to solicit his paternal blessing and kind advice: she had never seen, had never fancied any thing so venerably sacred, so perfectly in unison with the character her heart told her a minister of the gospel should be.

Thus mutually pleased, an hour served to render them well acquainted, and

Isabel, to her delighted surprise, found that in the good Rector, she had met the father of her young friend, Maria Clarkson ; who, now herself a mourning widow, resided with her fond parent.

As he spoke of the Captain's death, and of that of his own wife, which had preceded it but a few weeks, the tear of affection trembled in his eye, and when of Maria's sunk spirits and infant children, it rolled over his placid thoughtful cheek. " We are not," said he, " forbidden to mourn the loss of dear connections ; and when we do not mourn as those without hope, our sorrows must necessarily be ameliorated ; looking beyond the bounds of time and sense, we are enabled to hail the entrance of those we love into the bright realms of a blissful immortality, and hope again to join them there."

A few weeks served to settle Isabel in her new employ and abode : the generous Mrs. Thompson furnished the cottage

with every thing her well-stocked farm produced. In spite of all Isabel's remonstrances to the contrary, bacon, eggs, poultry, milk, and cheese, were plentifully sent in: the good clergyman supplied her with books, spiritual direction, and excellent advice on every subject. Maria bestowed her affection, her tears, and her admiration, — more she had not to give. But Isabel's best assistant was her faithful Kitty: from her she learnt to do all the things necessary to be taught the children of the poor; from her she obtained assistance in the labour and art of teaching the lowest branches of education; and by her was taught that indispensable part of instruction for the English poor, knitting. The income arising from such an employ was of course very small; but Isabel learnt to contract her wants to a narrow compass, and by example and precept, strove to impress her children with a sense of humility, and a love of independence and full employ.

The constant and uniform kindness of every part of the family to Sir William, and the playful endearments of his grandchildren, soon awoke in him some slight degree of sensibility; he would often listen with apparent attention to their little sallies, and sometimes a faint smile would play round his mouth; but it was some time after they were settled at W—, before he spoke or recollected his daughter, though her voice had always the effect of exciting in him attention. He would now often speak to the children, smile at the little Eliza, listen attentively to Cecilia's tales and hymns, allow Clara to draw her slender fingers through his thin grey locks, stroke his chin, and sing to him, and appear amused with the infant gambols of his chubby, happy grandson; he would sometimes look at Isabel intently, as if striving to recollect her face, then heaving a deep sigh, withdraw his eyes: but on no one occasion had he yet spoken to her.

The good Rector took unbounded interest in him, and strove with much solicitude to arouse in him a sense of feeling and recollection. To this end he frequently called his attention to Mrs. Escott, pronouncing her name, and speaking kindly to her, and of her, but the name had no effect; until one evening that they were sitting in the cottage-garden, Isabel made some remark to Mrs. Clarkson on the prospect, adding, "there is a something about that large house embosomed in the trees, that always reminds me of Fitzallen. Alas! dear Fitzallen, shall any part of my family ever see it again, divided as we are, and torn as that is from us?"

At the sound of Fitzallen, Sir William raised his eyes to her face, but moved not.

"Do you remember Fitzallen, dear grand-papa?" asked Clara; "do, pray, tell me, I want much to hear you describe it — Fitzallen, you know."

In a low murmur he repeated, "Fitzallen, you know; yes, but 'tis gone, so are all my children."

"Not all, sir," said the Rector, "one yet remains, your Isabel."

"Isabel! ah, she married and went away."

"But she is here, dear sir, your own kind Isabel."

"Isabel here! where?" said he, in a hurried voice, "I have almost forgotten, but she went to Asia, did she not?"

"She did, my dear sir, but here she now is before us."

Isabel was slowly walking up the little garden with Maria; she had not heard the conversation, but quickly remarked an unusual degree of enquiry in her father's looks.

"Isabel, come here," said the Rector, "and convince your father that you are indeed his child, his fond and dutiful Isabel Fitzallen."

Isabel fell on her knees before her

father — “ Oh !” exclaimed she, “ look on me, recollect me, forgive me, and love me, ever your own Isabel, my dear, dear father.”

Sir William placed his hand on her head, looked earnestly in her eyes, and said despondingly, “ she had eyes like those, and spoke like you ; but not so thin, not so pale, not this dress — it is not her.”

“ Oh, yes, my father, I am indeed your own child, your own Isabel ; thin and pale indeed, but your own ; O, believe and recollect me.”

“ And all these children !” murmured Sir William

“ They are mine, my father, your Isabel’s children ; their own father is in heaven ; I am a widow and poor, but your own Isabel.”

“ It is so indeed, dear grand-papa,” said the weeping Cecilia, “ you always believe what I say, you know ; so now believe me, this is my mother and your

daughter. Come, dear sir, they say we are poor, but if you will be well, we will be very happy, and love each other very much. Do, pray, speak to my mamma, who came all the way from Madras to see you and live with you."

Isabel, who still continued kneeling at her father's feet, at this moment raised her streaming eyes and hands to Heaven, and uttered an ejaculatory prayer for mercies and blessings on her dear father. Either her voice or attitude struck with conviction on his half-awakened senses; folding his arms around her neck, he exclaimed, in the broken voice of deep emotion, "My poor, poor Isabel, it is indeed her, and I knew thee not, my child; but I believe I have not known any thing for a long time."

A flood of tears, the first he had shed for many months, followed this exclamation. Isabel's tears, though they flowed plentifully, were rather those of joy than sorrow; while the children, the good

Rector, his mild daughter, and the rejoiced Kitty, added their tributes of praise and thanksgiving for a real blessing, which was not taken from them, until death closed the afflicted parent's eyes.

CHAP. IX.

ISABEL'S situation, humble as it was, was not free from trials and mortifications—she was exposed to no small evil from the numerous visitors to her charitable establishment. By her own sex she was regarded with a mixture of wonder and enquiry, often extremely annoying; and by the opposite with curiosity, doubt, and sometimes impertinence: but the latter was generally repelled by the mild dignity and saintly purity of her manners and demeanour. But her chief inconvenience arose from the wide distance between the sort of people she had to deal with, and herself. She could accommodate herself to their whims, could patiently hear their querulous and ridiculous complaints, could conscientiously labour for the improvement of their stu-

pid, stubborn, insolent, or spoilt children; but she could not gossip with them, could not drink their tea and hear their slander, could not allow her children to do as theirs did — in short, could not be *one of them*.

Under all circumstances Isabel was a gentlewoman; she could associate only with the Rector's family, and visit only them, and occasionally the respectable patron of her school. Thus by some she was deemed proud, by others distant and stiff, by others melancholy, by others, some fine lady in disguise; while the tea-drinking gentry, a step higher, who would fain have paid her what they considered the highest compliment, by admitting her of their crew, nodded their heads, sipped their tea, and sagaciously remarked, all mysteries were doubtful and dangerous — Mrs. Escott might, perhaps, be a widow, but it was very strange she should appear there immediately after poor Mrs. Wilkins's death, and then go no where

but about to visit the sick, and such like, except to the Rector's. Well, it was certainly an odd thing, and they wished it might all end well; but she was never born to keep a charity-school, that was clear, but time would show all.

Meanwhile Isabel pursued the noiseless tenor of her way, endeavouring to act justly by all, discharging her duties so as to retain a "conscience void of offence towards all men." She neither sought nor regarded the applause of men, but was ever active in aiding or assisting the poor, the fallen, the aged, the sin-sick penitent, and the distressed of every kind. By many of her little tribe she was affectionately loved, and on several her good advice and pure example were productive of the most beneficial effects, while her father considered her little less than an angel of light. He spent much of his time in the serious perusal of that book hitherto closed to him; by it his mind was enlightened and strengthened, and by the persuasive arguments of Isa-

bel, and her excellent friend the Rector, confirmed in the true and living faith; thus, as Isabel often said, rewarding all her griefs and sorrows by the fullest and most perfect hope.

Meanwhile her children grew and improved; the three youngest were all a mother's wishes could ask, but Clara was still the slave of her strong feelings; her loves and her hatreds were all in the extreme, and every rising passion found ready utterance: she knew nothing of concealment, and was imprudent as candid and generous. Her abilities appeared to be of the first order, but her health was extremely delicate, with strong indications of early consumption: her memory tenaciously retained every circumstance connected with her father's death, and the painful revolution that followed. The enmity she then bore Ellen Delville still remained in force, seeming to form a part of her proud and wounded heart. Their situation in life was constant gall and bitterness to her, and while she loved

her sisters with an enthusiastic ardour, she could ill brook the cheerful content with which they wore their coarse attire, (for Isabel had laid aside all their former handsome dresses, as unbecoming their present station,) eat their milk-breakfast, regularly supplied from Mrs. Thompson, in return for the instruction given an orphan niece, their dinner of herbs, and retired to rest on their clean but homely bed. For her mother she felt a degree of affection bordering on idolatry : that no woman ever had, nor ever could equal her in every thing praiseworthy and excellent, was Clara's firm opinion and frequent declaration. For Mr. Wilkins she entertained the highest esteem, and would hear from him reproof and correction with patience, and even gratitude ; because, she would say, a man who so highly honoured her mother, deserved from her every attention and respect, and a man valued by her mother must be a man of worth and sense.

A child thus endowed, and thus tenacious, required a steady delicate hand to manage, and called forth her only parent's care and anxiety. Often as Isabel gazed on the perfect beauty of her face and figure, the expressive animation of her countenance, the brilliant light of her dark eyes, and remarked the romantic generosity of her sentiments, the proud superiority with which she regarded her own little family, and the enthusiasm that marked her whole character, she would raise her tearful eyes to Heaven, and silently implore direction, wisdom and mercy for her darling but dangerous child.

The good Rector had kindly undertaken to assist Isabel in the most important parts of her own children's education. As Clara was one summer evening going to him for her lesson, she met a girl who had been some days absent from the school.

“ Where have you been, Patty ?” asked Clara.

“ Why, Miss, I ha bin to farmer Jones, to get some milk for mother.”

“ Why have you not come to school these several days, Patty ?”

“ Bin Granny wanted me to stay along wi she, Miss.”

“ I hope your Granny is very happy in her nice new cottage, Patty ?”

“ Not very, to my thinking, Miss ; but you had better come and see her.”

Casting her eyes to the village clock, Clara saw it yet wanted half an hour of the time appointed for her lesson, and calculating that she could visit goody Taylor and be back in time, she turned down the lane that led to the cottage. On the way, Clara examined her companion on the catechism, and questions given them to learn, and urged on her the necessity of improving her time by application, while it was in her power. The

girl listened with a careless, insolent sort of air for some little time, when Clara, in her anxiety to impress what she had said, asked, "Do you not feel yourself very happy and very grateful for the good education you are getting, and the pains my mother is at to teach you your religious duties?"

"Why, as to that, Miss," replied the girl, "feyther says as how there is a desperate fuss made about learning, and he don't see the good on't; and as to religion, feyther says as how, people wasn't teased about it in his time, and they be jest as good."

"I am ashamed, Patty," rejoined Clara, warmly, "to hear your father *could* talk so wickedly, or so ungratefully. I hope there are no more such persons in the village."

"Feyther isn't no more a wicked man than other people be wicked, I know that," muttered Patty, as with her young

monitress she turned into dame Taylor's new abode.

"How do you do this evening, Granny?" asked Clara, sweetly, "and how are all your rheumatic pains? — better, I hope, this fine warm weather, and in this nice neat little cottage."

"O I don't know as thay be any better — the house, to be sure, is bigger than the last, but somehow I liked that better nor this."

"Did you prefer a broken thatch to a sound one, a mud floor to this warm brick one, and wet walls to dry ones, Granny?"

"May be I don't; but somehow I think new houses and ways beant so good as the old ones. We was all good enough before your mother made such a fuss wi her teaching and her prayers; 'tis all well enough for gentlefolk, but such as we be better without it."

"Do you mean to say, Granny," re-

plied Clara, with scarlet cheeks, “that you are better without my dear mamma’s kind exertions for you, and that your children are better without education? For shame, Granny, at your age, to think such ungrateful things.”

“Hey dey!” said the old woman, “a fine pass things be come to when such chits as you cries shame on an old woman like me: and who be you, I wonder, or your fine lady *mamma* either, that takes upon ye to be better nor others, and makes such fuss about your larning?”

This was more than Clara’s indignant spirit could bear: she told the discontented granny her mother was, in every point of view, a gentlewoman; and only too humble, too saint-like, in condescending to instruct or care for such wicked, ungrateful people.

The old woman was one for whom Isabel had warmly interested herself, and by indefatigable exertions removed from a state of squalid poverty and starvation

to one of cleanliness and comparative affluence, and was but one of the many instances of thankless fretfulness constantly to be found among that class of society who receive most and feel least.

Clara, generously grateful herself, deeply affected by the state of the poor, proud of her mother, their benevolent patron, and good rector, and regarding their exertions as a work demanding the united thanks of every rank in society, had frequently been mortified by little acts of unkindness or expressions of discontent; but the open contempt shown by Goody Taylor was, Clara declared, more than human patience could or ought to endure.

She spent so much time in talking to the old woman, striving to convince her and her grand-daughter of the folly, nay the absolute sin, of their conduct, that the hour appointed for Mr. Wilkins's lessons passed unnoticed.

Enraged, mortified, and insulted, she

returned much later than usual to her mother's peaceful cottage. Isabel raised her eyes to the inflamed countenance and anger-sparkling eyes of her child, as with a voice expressive of sorrow she calmly said, "That unchristian countenance, my Clara, bespeaks the indulgence of those evil tempers I had hoped were by this time subdued. I do not ask the causes of your provocation, because I consider no cause can reconcile your own conscience to this breach of the laws of our mild and suffering pattern, who 'when reviled reviled not again.'"

"Oh! dearest mamma," replied the sobbing Clara, "do not, do not blame me unheard; you cannot conceive how I have been insulted, or how deeply you have been injured by those too, from whom every degree of gratitude was your due. Oh, this place! surely there can be no other so disgusting, so wicked as it

is : with all my heart I wish we were out of it. Do, pray, my beloved mamma, seek some other abode, in this there is no one good thing, no happiness or comfort."

Isabel quietly heard this angry exclamation to the end before she enquired the cause of so much disorder.

Clara related the occurrence with honest truth, and concluded by again entreating her mother to leave that wicked, cruel village.

"Do you remember, my dear," asked Isabel, "any of our troubles at Madras?"

"Perfectly, mamma; never name the horrid place."

"Do you remember our reception at Fitzallen?"

"Yes, indeed; the shameful people, I shall never forget them."

"Do you remember O'Neil, and his treatment of my father?"

“Certainly, mamma. No one, I suppose, ever heard of any thing so shameful.”

“Well, my dear, and do you recollect our residence at the hamlet, and the circumstances that induced me to come to this village?”

“O yes, my mother,” cried Clara, throwing her arms around her parent’s neck, “and I understand what you would have me think — that all the world are equally ungrateful and wicked. But if so, how can we ever bear to live in it in our humbled circumstances, better be dead at once.”

“As usual, Clara, you draw your inference, without considering the premises, laid down, of course, incorrectly. In all our troubles in Madras, you will recollect we had one family of faithful friends, who sorrow and distress but rendered more active: at Fitzallen, we were kindly treated by the butler: at the hamlet, we met from our friends Lord

and Lady Dunmore every consideration ; and at this place, Clara, we have surely met with encouragement, patronage, friendship, and a maintenance. What have not the good Thompsons done for us ? what our excellent Rector ? and for you in particular, Clara, who ought to have been benefiting by his instructions, instead of listening to the querulous complaints of ignorance. In saying there is *no good thing* here, in calling it 'a disgusting place, and in being eager to leave it to try a strange place, merely because it is strange, and in so doing throw back on the hands of Providence all its gifts and mercies as useless things, who, my child, is it that has been guilty of ingratitude ?”

“ Dear, dear mamma, I see my faults, I confess my ingratitude, and deplore my impatience : but indeed I can never bear to hear any one speak slightly of you or your exertions ; and this old woman, for whom you have done so very much,

she is unpardonable — she was the last that ought to have offended you.”

“ She has not offended me, my dear, nor am I surprised at her conduct.”

“ Not offended you, mamma ! how can you be so forgiving, so patient ! I am sure I never shall — it would be useless to try.”

“ Say not so, my love ; but recollect how much your Divine Parent daily bears with you and me. How often have I, in former times, said things to Mrs. Delville as ungrateful, though perhaps less coarse than those Granny Taylor said to you ; and did you not, by slighting your appointment with Mr. Wilkins, act as ungratefully ? Granny Taylor is an ignorant afflicted old woman, rendered querulous by constant pain, unsupported by a regenerate heart, and firm dependance on the hand of Omnipotence. You were offended by her thinking lightly of the very advantage you were yourself neglecting at that moment, and with her

apparent carelessness of the new house. A little reflection, Clara, would have taught you that it was a painful undertaking to an old lame woman to change her place of abode, where the very inconveniences were become natural, and like old acquaintance; it will take some time to reconcile her to the pains and difficulties of new things and new situations. She needs your prayers and commiseration, but your anger was indeed ill-directed."

"I see it, dear mamma, and shall, I think, never again act so improperly. Surely I have been more unthankful than any one ever was before. I quite hate myself for such passionate folly. Can you ever forgive me, my beloved mamma?"

"I can easily forgive you, my child; but there is a forgiveness more important than mine, that it is necessary to ask in deep humility. Now go to your bed, and let this be a lasting lesson to you not to yield to temper, or fancy that you are

constantly to experience from the world what they and you refuse to your first Benefactor."

Clara retired in tears, and wept herself to sleep in deep contrition; and the next morning, before she entered on the duty of assisting her mother in the school, ran to the rectory, and related to Mr. Wilkins all the events of the foregoing evening, inveighed against her own folly, idleness, and ingratitude, and implored his forgiveness and future advice; promising implicitly to be guided by him in every respect, and never again to neglect a lesson he would kindly bestow on her.

Mr. Wilkins heard her tale and her self-condemnation in silence: he loved the child with paternal fondness, and grieved to discover in her, dispositions that required the constant undeviating hand of judicious correction. In the present case, even his persuasive voice almost failed to reconcile her to herself, or calm the agitation the very fear of

appearing ungrateful to so good a friend caused ; and many times she assured him nothing could feel more sensibly all his generous kindness than her overflowing heart.

The apostolic veteran soothed her agitation — gave mild and suitable advice — pardoned the neglect of the preceding evening — blessed and then dismissed the subdued girl, with fervent prayers for her future welfare.

Isabel still actively pursued her course — the children improved in morals and industry. She who a few years before would have spurned the very thought of what her brother once called Lady Bountiful virtues, who knew not the use and scarcely the name of those housewifely implements of employ, needles, thread, scissars, &c. &c. now instructed her poor pupils carefully in the use of them all ; and not only that, but invented many useful kinds of employment for the poor, worked at them herself, and taught others

how to do so. Many of her evenings were devoted to visiting the sick and afflicted —

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns dismayed,
The female champion stood.

To such Isabel was the friend, comforter, adviser, support, and guide.

As her tall figure bent o'er the bed — her dark eyes beaming the mild rays of heavenly inspiration — her pale clear cheek animated by the greatness of her cause — her upraised finger pointing to the regions of the blessed, as the refuge from care, the reward of suffering ; and the soft full tones of her musical voice fell on the ear and met the senses, it was impossible to withhold the meed of applause, or to withdraw the charmed attention. In such scenes Isabel stood pre-eminently great: purified by affliction, she scarcely seemed to partake of the earth on which she lived, but looked and

moved the successful candidate for "another and a better world."

Isabel had been the village friend, teacher, and physician, upwards of two years, when a circumstance occurred that caused her to open a chest containing all that remained of former greatness, such things as in her present situation were useless, and the sight of them an unnecessary waste of feelings, that required to be kept in vigorous action: hence the chest had hitherto occupied a spare corner of her bed-room unmolested. But Mrs. Clarkson, whose innocent gaiety was returning in full force, needing at this time some article of dress that it was not perfectly convenient to purchase, Isabel recollected she had such, and the desire of presenting it to her friend overcame every objection to examine her long-neglected store of finery. On opening it, the first thing that met her eye was a packet, addressed in the well-known hand of Colonel Delville. Isabel seized it with a trembling hand and pal-

pitating heart, but forbore to open it until her business at the chest was completed.

Having selected the desired articles for Mrs. Clarkson, she sat down to examine her packet. It contained a letter from Mrs. Delville, written with all the affection, solicitude, and earnestness of the most affectionate sister. It implored her to persevere in the right road, to use the enclosed freely in any way that appeared likely to be advantageous, and to believe that her house and heart should ever prove the home of parent and children. Isabel pressed the letter to her full heart, and gratefully thanked the hand that had thus far brought her on her journey, and in giving her such friends made her rich indeed.

She then proceeded to open the Colonel's letter — an enclosure fell from it — she read on, and found it filled with every expression of brotherly kindness and consideration for herself and children; he

said that the officers of his regiment had, as a token of respect to a former brother officer, insisted on defraying the expenses of her voyage home. He had refrained from mentioning their intentions, fearful of either overwhelming or mortifying feelings already too greatly excited; but that she would find an order enclosed for two hundred and forty pounds, the sum remaining from the sale of her property, and that all remaining valuables would be found at the bottom of the chest where his Eliza had placed them when Isabel supposed them to be sold.

The paper that had fallen contained an order for the sum named. Isabel read, wept, and read again — blamed herself for the self-indulgence that had so long kept her ignorant of the extent of obligation she owed the inestimable Colonel and his wife, and prevented those due acknowledgments her bursting heart would so gladly have relieved itself by making, and then determined to lose no more

time in doing that which every sentiment of gratitude required.

The good Rector, as usual, was Isabel's adviser in what way to dispose of her unexpected treasure. To his first enquiry, "Are you weary of your present situation?" Isabel returned a cheerful and unequivocal negative. Clara, who sat by, turned her eyes in dismayed surprise on her mother, while Cecilia's countenance brightened into a delighted smile.

"Then," said the good man, "remain where and what you are — useful, respected, and daily doing and gaining good ; if you need any little comforts, or even luxuries, freely take them from your Providence-sent fortune, but buy the remainder into the English funds ; thus providing for a future day of claim, or trouble. Clara, my child, you do not appear to concur heartily in my proposition, what are your wishes?"

"Perhaps, sir, very improper ones,

and such as ought not to be indulged, or named."

"Let me hear them, Clara: your mother's only desire is to serve her children, and nothing would add more to my happiness, than seeing you all in desirable and happy situations; therefore speak freely your wishes on this occasion."

"My wishes, dear sir, are, that my mother would quit this village, and in the county, or any other town, open a respectable boarding-school, where my mamma would enjoy the advantages of comfort, genteel society, and respect; and my sisters and self might finish our educations in a manner suited to the daughters of a gentleman. There can be no doubt of success, talents such as my mother's must command it; and should we then be recognised, we need no longer blush at our situation."

"Then you really do blush at being

considered the child of a village school-mistress, Clara ?”

“ By no means, sir ; but I blush that the grand-daughter of an earl, and the widow of an officer, the nephew of a marquess, should be thus reduced, or rather should be thus employed ; and I think it is due to her, to my sisters, and myself, that our situation should be improved soon as possible.”

“ What say you, Cecilia ?” asked Isabel.

“ Say, my dear mamma, that any situation you may fill will by that means become respectable, and to me agreeable ; still I think with Clara a boarding-school, admitting only children of great respectability, might be obtained, and would in every point of view be preferable to the present. But gratitude and affection bind me to W— I have no wish ever to leave its peaceful boundaries, and submit to you, if a school of the description we

wish, might not as probably be raised here, as in a town or city.”

The Rector thanked Cecilia for her love of his favourite village, and advised Isabel to consider how far it might be prudent to meet her children's wishes. A circumstance that happened a few days after gave weight to their desires, and appeared to draw matters to a crisis. Clara's coarse straw bonnet and stuff frock could not disguise the high-born gentlewoman, nor the delicacy of her frame and cheek hide its extreme beauty; beside this, her manners and language suited better a court than a cottage, as did that of both her sisters. The consequence was, that the children frequently attracted the attention of strangers, and excited curiosity, - that produced many enquiries, which, if at all directed to Clara, roused to arms every proud and mortified feeling, and generally produced replies that astonished the enquirer, and forbid another question ;

while it produced the strongest desire for further information.

Such was the case as the three sisters returned from the rectory, where they had been taking a lesson, a few days after Isabel's discovery. A party of ladies and gentlemen accosted them with politeness; Cecilia replied with mild good-breeding, until their names were demanded; Cecilia was immediately silent, Eliza motioned to pass on, but Clara replied with a spirit and self-possession, that disconcerted her amazed querists. The three girls then moved on, with an air and manner the opposite of their humble appearance. Separately they afterwards encountered some of the party several times, but young as they were, the children of Isabel inherited a sense of propriety and self-esteem, that generally elicited respect from others, or at least silenced impertinence.

Isabel was busily engaged in her school duties, assisted by her eldest daughter,

when the sudden appearance of a gay party crimsoned her children's faces, and contracted the open brows of Clara and Eliza. Isabel raised her mild expressive eyes, and met the bold unlicensed stare of her old acquaintance Lord Tredegare. For a moment, a slight tinge shaded the pale cheek, and a feeling of contempt elevated her arched eye-brows; but quickly recovering, she turned the other way, and calmly resumed her employ. Lord Tredegare stared boldly round, then advancing towards Isabel, exclaimed, "Upon my soul it is so, I could have sworn that child's divine eyes were familiar to me, as well as her haughtiness. Why, Mrs. Escott, who the devil could have expected to meet you in this strange place, teaching young brats their A B C."

Seeing he waited a reply, Isabel said, composedly, "I neither know, nor desire to know, what Lord Tredegare expected, or thinks."

"Do you know this person, my lord?"

asked a very pretty young woman, in an affected tone.

“ *Parfaitement bien, ma belle ami,*” replied his lordship ; “ that is, I did know her once a first-rate East India *belle*, and, upon my soul, am sorry to see her so reduced.”

“ *Telle est le monde,*” replied the fair lady, “ such things are every day seen. Pray, good woman, how long have you followed this *honourable* employ ? Do you propose that your daughters shall succeed you ?”

Isabel deigned no reply, and appeared not to hear ; but the faithful Kitty had not so much self-controul.

“ My mistress, madam,” said she, “ has followed this honourable employ almost ever since she came to England, rather than fill the less honourable station you have just attained — that of *wife to Lord Tredegare* ; an honour positively rejected by the poor, but noble Mrs. Escott.”

Lord Tredegare coloured, bit his lips,

muttered something about "cursed impertinence," "insolent interference;" then turning to the young lady, demanded if she had seen enough of this nonsense.

"Yes, indeed," replied she, "and heard too much. I think I might have been spared this insult, my lord."

"O cursed, stupid stuff; sure Emily, my dear, you do not give credit to such raving."

"There must be truth in it, though," returned the lady; "but if you only kept her as a mistress, I ought not to have been introduced to such a person; but perhaps this accounts for the interest you feel in the girls."

Isabel raised her eyes, flaming with long forgotten fire; one scarlet spot appeared on either cheek, as with a voice and look, threatening annihilation to the young peeress, she said, "Learn to know, young woman, that she who preferred poverty to the degradation of marrying

Lord Tredegare, would have preferred all the torments of the Inquisition, to introducing under his roof the children of the Honourable George Escott, as much your husband's superior in birth, as in morals and abilities. Kitty, open the door, and be careful how intruders are again admitted."

A loud laugh from one of the ladies, and, "very fine, 'pon my soul," drew Isabel's attention that way, and the possessors of Fitzallen met her view: but it was not in the power of such beings as these to mortify Isabel; she directed towards them one glance of silent contempt, and noticed them no further. An elderly respectable looking woman, who had been talking to Eliza, now advanced to Isabel, and with a manner, and voice full of sweetness, apologised for the rudeness of her friends, but hoped Isabel would not forbid her future visits, which she assured her should be made with a view to her in-

terest alone. Isabel coolly thanked her, declining any further acquaintance, and assuring her that no efforts were necessary for promoting her interest, since her family and self possessed all they needed in abundance.

Isabel's manner, the musical tones of her voice, and the decision with which she spoke, surprised the old lady into silence; with a polite bow, and an expression of regret, she followed the party who had gone on before. Clàra's proud spirit could sustain no more; she struggled for a few moments against it, and then sunk under one of those dreadful attacks of convulsion, from which she had formerly suffered so much. It happened that Clara was the darling and delight of Sir William, and the seeing her suffer had such an effect on his mind, that he was again reduced to a state of imbecility, but little better than that in which Isabel first found him.

A few days restored Clara to compa-

rative health, but her spirits had evidently sustained a most violent shock ; for the consequences of which Isabel's maternal heart trembled ; and to prevent a repetition, as far as lay in her power, appeared now a duty. Nor was Clara the only sufferer, the circumstance had gained publicity, and her sisters shrunk beneath the gaze of insolence, and the enquiries of curiosity. Thus situated and perplexed was Isabel, when she received the following letter from America, the first Emma Hammond had written since her sister's widowhood.

Philadelphia, 17th 5th month, 18—

“ MY DEAR SISTER,

“ Perhaps thou thinkest it strange that I have not written to thee before this ; but I candidly acknowledge, that if thou hadst continued an unbeliever of the things that make for thy everlasting welfare, I should never more have noticed thee, for from such we are commanded

to 'come out.' But I rejoice to hear that thy strippings were not in vain, that thou hast seen the error of thy ways, and turned to the path of truth, in which thou hast now walked some time circumspectly. From this I am encouraged to hope, that thou art bringing up thy children carefully, and instructing them in humble simplicity. Should this be the case, my dear and excellent husband bids me tell thee, that thou and thy children, or any part of thy children, are bidden and welcome to our house. Shouldst thou choose to accept this invitation, we will put thee in some way of obtaining an honest maintenance in Philadelphia; or if thou preferest to live in England, we will take one of thy children, to be to us as our own. We have eight of our own, and one of our unworthy brother's; but are still willing to add one of thine to the number. Our respected friend, Charles Penn, who resides in Cork, will put thee in a way to meet

one of the ships belonging to the firm, and thy passage shall be given thee. I should like to know if our father be yet alive, and in what state. I would hope that he, like thee, may have been purified in the furnace of affliction.

“With every good wish for thy future welfare, I remain thy sincere friend and sister,

“EMMA HAMMOND.”

Isabel read this letter with feelings of grateful joy ; its laconic quaintness could not hide the real offers of service it contained ; and Isabel, while she hesitated not in declining those offers, prepared to do so with every sentiment of affection and kindness. From her old lover, Lord Tredegare, she heard no more ; but the effect it had taken on her children, determined her to yield to their wishes, and place them, if possible, in circumstances of greater comfort and respectability. She there-

fore immediately set about it with all the energy and decision of her character; and the next three months saw her at the head of a school in the same village, and mistress of a handsome house, and every convenience. Isabel found it a situation replete with difficulty and trial, of great responsibility and incessant fatigue: neither her circumstances nor her principles would allow her to commit a trust so sacred to the care of hirelings; hence the arduous duties and cares of such an undertaking fell on her own shoulders, and often excited a half-breathed wish for her humble cottage and simple pupils. But the welfare of her darlings restrained it; they were evidently gainers in every respect by the alteration, and this advantage was Isabel's happiness, stimulus, and reward.

CHAP. X.

As a funeral wound slowly down the vale in which the village church of W—— stood, an elderly gentleman, whose deeply-marked countenance bore the strong traces of care and distant climes, drew up his horse on one side to let it pass. The funeral train was not long, but it bore an appearance of real sorrow seldom seen.

“Who is the poor deceased?” asked the stranger of a man, who, with a reaphook in his sturdy hand, stood with folded arms and a pity-speaking expression on his weather-beaten face, regarding the passing scene — “A gentleman, your honour, that ha seed better days; there, God rest his soul, he’s a took from a troublesome wordle.”

“And his wife and children following him to the grave,” replied the stranger; “even he had this consolation, one my death-bed must want — no wife, no child, no friend, no relation. Alas! poor corpse, I envy even thee.”

“Anan,” gaped the rustic.

“I say,” resumed the stranger, “the gentleman was happy in having his wife and children with him when he died.”

“Humph, I never zeed that do much good nor I; ’tis a queer thing to think a man would die happier case his wife and children wanted a husband or feyther. I take it, zur, you ha bin in outlandish pearts.”

“I have, my good fellow, and returned to find all my family dead or dispersed beyond recall.”

“Lard, zur, so did poor madam, that you zeed go down with the berrin; why hur had a mort of troubles, that I can tell ye; but the like o’ hur were never zeed in these pearts avore.”

“ She appeared young from her figure : was her husband young, or has he been long ill ? ”

“ I never knowd her husband, zur ; but I think as how he was a youngish sort o’ man ; but she didn’t live in these pearts avore he died.”

“ Who then is the friend she is now following to the grave ? ”

“ Who is it, zur ! why who should it be but the ould barrownight ; he was a sort o’ nidget, poor man, but she was despart fond o’n, and so wur the little girdles. Many a times when thay lived down in the valley, and kept the day-school, ha I zeed them, little creturs, leading the ould man about like little angels, while madam, but we didn’t call her madam then, was tending the sick and comforting the poor, and takin to ’em, and praying we ’em as good as the pason hissel’ : well, there, I always zed as how God Almighty woud bless her for all the good she done to my poor mother,

and to Betty and the youngsters when mother died, and so he do ; but she be just the same humble sort o' body now as she was then. Ah, the lik o' hur don't come often to a country parish ; 'twur a good thing for this place when she comed."

"What is her name, my good friend?"

"Hur name is Madam Escott, zur, since she lived at the great house."

"Escott! Escott! at what great house!" said the stranger, hastily.

"The great house on your right hand, a top o' the hill where the leadies' school be kept, zur: that is Madam Escott's, and God bless hur wi it, and wi all she can get."

"I think you said the deceased was a baronet? was he any relation of Mrs. —— of your friend?"

"To be sure, zur; why he wur hur feyther."

"Her father! do you recollect his name?"

"Noe, zur, nor never could; but he comed from over the sea, Ireland, I

think volk zay, and I think as how the little girdles called un Zur Willum."

"I'd give the world to know who they are — such an elegant creature, it surely must be her," said the stranger, thoughtfully.

"Law, zur," answered the rustic, "if so be you do want to hear any thing about madam, our pason can tell ye every thing; for he do know more nor any body else; only don't you go there, if you ha got any bad designs in your head, for our pason beant a man for them kind o' things, and ye'l come off wi the worst on't."

The stranger enquired the parson's name, and hearing the knell that declared the object of his enquiries to be laid in his "narrow house," gave the rustic half-a-crown, wished him good day, and turned his horse's head towards the rectory. The Rector was not yet returned from the melancholy duties of his office. Mrs. Clarkson received him, and to his observations on the funeral he

had passed, spoke in high encomiums of Mrs. Escott and her sweet family, calling her her best and dearest friend.

“Have you known her long?” enquired the stranger. Mrs. Clarkson related the manner in which they became acquainted, described the persecution she endured during the voyage, her piety, her submission, her firm confidence on the Supreme Disposer of events, and the active industry with which for years she had pursued a humble employ, and the assiduity with which she still laboured in the most arduous of all undertakings.

The stranger listened with anxious interest to every sentence. Still her father’s name did not escape, though Mrs. Clarkson often named him by other appellations: at last, with breathless impatience, he demanded it; on receiving the name, he started from his chair, and walked towards the window, exclaiming, “Gracious God! in this unlikely spot, and so strangely introduced.”

Before Mrs. Clarkson could demand an explanation, Mr. Wilkins returned, and the stranger immediately entered on the business of his visit, by announcing himself as Earl of Glenmuir, and then begged leave to make some enquiries respecting Mrs. Escott, in whom he hoped to discover his almost only relative. The Rector gave him all the information he judged prudent, and concluded by saying Mrs. Escott was a woman that would do honour to any situation in life; but that he believed no inducement would be sufficient to take her into the gay world, or again number her among the pursuers of pleasure in fashionable life.

The earl professed himself sick of the world, and eager for retirement. He spoke in warm and energetic terms of his troubles, disappointments, sickness, and bereavements; his almost certain hope of having found a near relative, who, though in circumstances far beneath her birth,

was yet an object of esteem and love. Her mother's name Mr. Wilkins could not give him, but knew she was the daughter of a Scotch earl many years dead, and from whom no part of the Fitzallen family had ever heard : but he promised to prepare Isabel for an interview the next morning, and, if required, be there himself. The earl accepted his offer with thanks, and an hour being appointed, rose and took his leave.

The Honourable Douglas Bruce was the second son of the Earl of Glenmuir. At eighteen years of age he left his paternal abode, to acquire wealth and fame in the dangerous service of the East. He left his sisters lovely, blooming girls, happy in retirement, and unknown to the world. Isabella, the middle one, had always been his favourite ; with her he often wandered over their native woods and mountains, and with her anticipated the day, when, rich in this world's goods, he should return to share his home and wealth with her. Placed in a remote

station, he seldom heard from Scotland, and it was only in reply to repeated enquiries, he learnt that Isabella had disgraced her family by eloping with an unknown Irishman. This was rather more than the truth, since, in point of family, Sir William Fitzallen claimed precedence even of the Earl of Glenmuir; but his name was carefully repressed, as if the very writing of it would be a disgrace. Thus he could not write his sister; and Lady Isabella fancying herself neglected, forbore to write or seek her family.

In a few years, Major Bruce married an amiable woman of considerable fortune; and amidst all the fatigues of climate and profession, few men enjoyed a greater portion of happiness. But the vicissitudes of thirty years had taught him the precarious tenure on which all earthly felicity is held. His sons fell gloriously in their country's cause, but still they *did fall*. His daughters scarcely lived beyond the age of childhood, except one — that one

sunk under the loss of her brothers, and the bereaved father stood childless. Still his beloved wife remained, and time and sorrow but endeared his faithful partner. Another year stript him of this last hope, and the Earl of Glenmuir, for such by his father's and brother's death he was now become, returned a solitary being to Europe, nearly forty years after he first left it, to find his family swept from the face of the earth, scarcely a vestige remaining of that proud house, who had a few years before claimed title to sway the rod of empire; from some hundredth cousin he learnt the name and residence of his sister Isabella's husband, and instantly set off in search of her family; but here, as in Scotland, disappointment awaited him. The house of Fitzallen had shared the fate of many others, and were either lost, or at least absentees, not from choice, but necessity. From no one could he gain any information where, or in

what circumstances, the baronet and his daughter were to be found. That one son was in America, and worthless, was all he could learn with certainty. Lord Dunmore was from home, and no one else could say more, than that they believed the daughter was a widow, living somewhere in England with her father.

On this slender prospect the earl came to England, and travelled the country through, enquiring at every probable place for Sir William ; but was passing through the village of W——, without the slightest hope of finding them there, when he met all that remained of the father carrying to its last silent home, followed by the mourning Isabel and her children. Isabel's dress, which she had never altered since her husband's death, gave birth to the idea that it was her husband she wept, and the earl at the sight felt with poignancy what he hourly deplored, the bereaved and lonely state in which he was.

At the time the Earl of Glenmuir recognised Isabel as his niece, she had for upwards of three years conducted a boarding-school, conscientiously discharging her arduous duties, but adding neither to her comforts nor profits. An increased income required increased expenses, and brought with it an accumulation of care ; beside this, it had been the means of introducing her children into notice, and in some degree to the world. The two younger were lovely, well-educated girls, who still retained their humility, and promised to reward her cares in the happiest manner. Her son had never yet been a day separated from her ; Isabel loved to watch his opening mind, to direct his views, and assist his enquiries in all he said or thought. In his open generous candour, his hatred of oppression, and his readiness to succour the oppressed, Isabel traced, or fondly fancied she traced, his loved father : in the tones of his voice and expression of his countenance, she again saw and

heard that voice and face it had long been her delight to contemplate. But the time was now come that called for a more distinct education. George was eight years old, and equal to most boys of ten ; his mother wished to give him a good education and a profession, but how to do either was the difficulty. The Rector was about to place his grandson with a friend, who increased the income of a small living by taking a few boarders and preparing them for the University. It was Isabel's anxious desire to send her son with him, and Clara urged it strenuously ; but her income was uncertain and inadequate, and the fear of embarrassments restrained her. Clara, now fifteen, was beautiful as fancy could pourtray, with a mind as superior as her person, accomplished and well-informed ; but unstable, volatile, easily charmed, and quickly offended ; fond of the world, a lover of dress, and eager of admiration.

Such was the family to which the Earl of Glenmuir was introduced, and never in Isabel's most brilliant days had she looked more beautiful or more interesting. She was no longer young, and sorrow had prematurely mingled its bleach with the raven bands that crossed her polished forehead beneath the widow's close-drawn cap. The deep sables of her dress were strongly contrasted by the pure whiteness of her skin; the fire of her large dark eyes was quenched, but in its place shone the rays of chastened hope and quiet joy; the perfect peace that reigned within, shed on her intelligent countenance a softened light, a kind of moonshine brilliance that extended to all around her; while round her still lovely mouth played the resigned smile of cheerful submission, giving to her peculiarly-touching voice a pathos that immediately reached the heart, creating for itself an affection and interest indescribable.

Isabel rose as the earl entered, who, struck with the dignified, graceful appearance of the beautiful matron, arrested his steps, and for a few moments gazed in silence. Emotion held Isabel dumb. Her life had been so replete with vicissitude, so abundant in misfortune, that she scarcely knew for what to hold herself prepared. Subdued as her feelings were, she yet hoped and feared with painful anxiety for her darlings. A short time set both at ease : Isabel need but speak to assure her identity, and her delighted uncle felt but too happy in discovering relations so richly endowed. He proposed that Isabel should instantly relinquish her school, and with her family remove to a house he would purchase in London, and of which she should be considered the perfect uncontrolled mistress. He would reside with her, and settle a sufficient sum on her and her daughters to make them feel independent. The education and future pro-

vision of George he would take on himself, and enable Isabel to introduce her children into the world as became the nieces of the Earl of Glenmuir.

“And what,” asked Isabel, thoughtfully, “will you require of me in capacity of *Madame la Maîtresse*, my generous friend?”

“I *require*,” replied the earl, “my dear niece, that you should do just what is agreeable. As mistress of the house, you will of course receive your own company, take the head of the table, and act in every respect as you would were Mr. Escott its owner instead of myself.”

“That, my dear sir, is what in London I cannot do: my spirits are not equal to all I should encounter; my health has lately suffered; and beyond all, my *principles* forbid it. Grateful, therefore, as I feel, we cannot accept all your offer: be my friend, be my children’s benefactor, and, in return, whenever the

country shall be your choice, we will strive to render your stay among us cheerful and happy : but leave me our humble retirement, where I can shield my darlings from the contamination of a fashionable life — from the vices of the world — from the pestiferous breath of passion and infidelity — from the poison I drank so freely of myself.”

Lord Glenmuir combated this resolution with all the argument and persuasion he was master of ; pointed out the advantages that would accrue to herself and children ; dwelt forcibly on the advantage of the girls being properly introduced, accomplished and beautiful as they were ; and, with the fortunes he should give them, their marrying well was a certainty : hence he almost claimed her acquiescence as a duty.

“ I see clearly, my dear sir,” said Isabel, “ that you and I use the same words with different meanings : what I should call marrying well, you would

probably consider a misfortune ; and what you would call marrying well, I possibly could not in conscience accede to. For my children I am anxious to secure present and eternal happiness, but I am thoroughly convinced neither is to be obtained in a life of fashionable frivolity—I must, therefore, decidedly decline entering on it. Two of my daughters would with myself choose active retirement, from a sense of religious duty ; and for the other, I feel it my duty to act with circumspection. No, dear sir, we cannot go into the world—we do not live for it—we will live to God and for Eternity alone !”

For several days the earl continued to persuade and reason with his niece, until wearied with his fruitless efforts he would call in the aid of her daughters.

Cecilia without hesitation decided on earning her maintenance, and preserving liberty of conscience. The pleasures and gaieties her uncle so bountifully

promised her, were no temptations to Cecilia. Strongly impressed with Divine truths, her first desire was to discharge her every duty in an acceptable manner, and walk in the path of life wherein she could be most useful, however lowly it might be.

Eliza professed herself perfectly satisfied that her mother would decide properly, and without a wish beyond her parent's will. The only support the earl met was occasionally from Clara, who, still in some degree influenced by the force of early impressions, often longed for the glare, splendour, and flattery of high life. She knew her own advantages, and to improve them, to be the first on the list of grace and fashion, appeared "a consummation devoutly to be wished."

At such times Isabel would repeat the story of her former life, or passages from it. "Ah, my mother," Clara would then exclaim, "if you so nearly fell, how

shall your poor unstable Clara dare the experiment? — or why wish it? Am I not perfectly happy in my present situation? No, dear sir, we cannot enter the lists of folly; leave us where you found us, — in humble retirement: yet, oh that we had never heard your tempting offers!”

Isabel saw and deplored this vacillating between the world and a sense of better things in her child; but it only tended to strengthen her decision against accepting the earl's proposals, who on his part began to lose patience, and at last told Isabel he would give her forty-eight hours to reconsider the subject; — at the end of that time, he would place her in the situation of life she was born to fill, introduce her children into life, and handsomely provide for them, rendering her absolutely independent as to pecuniary concerns, and allowing her all the religious liberty a woman of sense could require; — if, from a whim he

could not understand, she refused that, he would cast her and her family off for ever, and leave his fortune to endow hospitals for the religiously insane.

Isabel would have given her reply at once, but as this, he said, was to be definitive, he insisted on her considering the subject, and once more consulting her friends at the rectory, and her children.

Isabel strove to do so; but the kind Rector said he felt too keenly on the subject to offer any advice: his dear Isabel no longer needed it, she was more competent to give than receive instruction. Mrs. Clarkson strongly urged the earl's side of the question, offering as arguments, Isabel's shattered health, her broken spirits, and natural antipathy to the employ she had so many years pursued. Clara joined with Mrs. Clarkson; little Eliza stood neuter and at ease; but Cecilia, as firm and decided as her mother, professed her hope of soon taking

the burden from her mother's shoulders, her determined adherence to the character and pursuits of Christianity, and positive rejection of every offer that would lead her into the world, however splendid or flattering.

There were some few other friends that on this occasion offered their advice : — from all Isabel received it with gratitude, but her resolves were unalterable. Founded on principle, the question was not one of choice, but of conscience ; and with that Isabel dared not compromise. Her first friend, the good and benevolent founder of her charity-school, was among the few who applauded and understood her objections ; and satisfied that her decision was that of an upright conscience, Isabel contentedly prepared to continue the sickening labour of her profession the remainder of her sacred life. One thing alone gave her uneasiness, which was the education of her son : — he was the next heir to the

earldom of Glenmuir, should the earl not marry, a threat he had several times held out; and ought to receive an education befitting such a walk in life. But this Isabel resolved to leave where she had hitherto left her concerns and had not been disappointed.

Some days later than he had appointed, Lord Glenmuir called on Isabel; he was agitated and dispirited; and to Isabel's firm refusal of entering or permitting her children to enter the gay world, urged the morality of the world, or at least that part of it he should require her to associate with, and was sure she would soon see her error in carrying her sentiments so high, and thereby ruining her family.

“I am sorry,” replied Isabel, “to act in a way you cannot understand, my dear sir; but the morality of which you speak, appears to me the dire foe of true religion, and of course to be avoided with the utmost care.”

“ Do, pray, Isabel, favour me with your proofs in support of this singular opinion,” said the earl, sarcastically.

“ Promise me your candid attention, sir,” replied Isabel, “ and you shall hear what I consider as proofs, and which assist in regulating my conduct accordingly.”

The earl bowed, and Isabel continued: — “ There are few who feel more deeply than myself the errors of a moralist, so called ; for, strictly speaking, morality and religion are one, but not in the general sense — not in the sense you name it, or in which my husband and myself for many years pursued it : but when we consider our real condition as a race of sinful creatures, who can be reconciled to God and saved only in the way he has appointed, such moralists will be found injurious to mankind, infinitely above the fraudulent and villainous ; these we naturally guard against and detest, though they can only hurt our property ; but by affecting to know no

duty beyond justice and benevolence, they erase from the mind of all who regard them a sense of Divine government over us, — they teach us to imagine that faith and devotion belong only to weak bigots, — they teach us to deny every revealed and important truth ; thus rendering us, by our profaneness, incapable of admission into that world where God is all in all. We are commanded by his dictates to pray in secret—to pray always, and diligently search the Scriptures. — Moralists are confident there is no need of so much religion, because men may be very good without any devotion at all. He dwells upon the necessity of faith, ascribing to this grace a kind of omnipotence. Moralists violently dislike laying such a stress upon believing ; they substitute therefore honesty and benevolence in its place, esteeming these virtues quite sufficient. He, by all that can alarm or persuade, claims supreme love to himself, as the first instance of

duty. Moralists nauseate so much piety, and suppose him more honoured by their *moral conduct*, than by every prayer and act of faith since the world began. Hence it is evident that whilst other sins are no more than a breach of some particular duty, this profaneness, misnamed morality, despises the great object of all : while other sins are so many attacks upon different parts of the Divine law, this subverts the authority of the whole, consequently there cannot be a greater opposition than is found in those self-named moralists to the Divine Majesty and will, to his truth and ordinances, to the temper of the church on earth, and of the whole company in heaven ; none therefore can be in a state more incapable of admission into the world of everlasting piety and devotion."

"I have listened, my dear Isabel, with attention to all you have said, but do you not carry your idea of moralists to persons undeserving that title, or do you include

in the persons you have been describing those who regularly attend their church and lead good lives, but enter into the engagements and pleasures of the world?"

"Certainly they must be included, dear sir, since the pleasures of this world is enmity against God. It is melancholy to reflect that many who call themselves Christians should be fatally deceived to conclude strict integrity and warm benevolence the whole duty of man. Let such very superficial thinkers learn to examine by the touch-stone of truth from whence actions proceed and their natural tendency: then, they will no longer most irrationally conclude *any* action can be truly good where the *principle* is essentially defective, or any quality or object *lovely*, which, upon the whole, proves exceedingly injurious to God and man."

"If such, Isabel, are your serious sentiments, I shall urge you no more; there is too much opposition in our opinions to insure happiness—we must go on as

though we had never met. Your boy will probably be my successor — mortifying ! a schoolmistress's son ! but so it must be. Do what you can for him. I will, if alive, see you again in a few months."

"As often, dear sir," replied Isabel, impressively, "and as long as you find convenient we shall rejoice in your company ; and oh ! that you could see things as I do — with what delight should I strive to render the decline of your life happy. But I cannot, dare not sacrifice my children's souls, even though yours were the reward. You have my prayers, my gratitude, and my warmest wishes ; and remember, should sickness or misfortune render a nurse or comforter necessary to you, Isabel and her daughters will cheerfully obey your slightest summons."

* * * For the arguments used by Isabel against Moralists, the author owns herself obliged to the Rev. H. Venn's excellent Essay on the Prophecy of Zacharias.

CHAP. XI.

No sooner did Horace Fitzallen receive the long-desired information that his father was no more, though accompanied by a letter from Isabel, stating the alienation of the family estate and the unsuccessful efforts of Lord Dunmore to recover it, and advising him to continue a few years longer in America until his family were, in some degree, provided for, than, overlooking all but that he was now Sir Horace Fitzallen, the representative of an ancient Milesian race, he ostentatiously assumed his title, talked largely of his immense Irish property, and claimed as much respect and deference on account of it as the veriest aristocrat that ever breathed, while he loudly denounced laws and lawgivers, crowns and crowned heads,

church and churchmen. With the same kind of republican inconsistency he declared his intention of immediately returning to Ireland and revolutionizing the country round, while he could not command sufficient to take him a hundred miles, and knew nothing awaited him in Ireland but poverty.

As mutual confidence formed no part of the bond that bound Horace and Matilda together, he had not deemed it necessary to tell her any thing beyond the death of his father and his intention of returning home. Experience had taught Matilda very little: the prospect of title, property, and fashion, though seen through the long vista of doubt and distance, dazzled her weak mind and flattered her world-loving heart.

Emma Hammond, who heard many particulars from her sister, strove to set the matter in a right light before Matilda, but stubbornness is the peculiar trait of a weak mind and mild temper. Matilda

possessed both, and stubbornly refused to believe any thing that did not flatter her pride, or was not told her by her husband. One only difficulty remained — the means of getting to Ireland; for while the democratic friends of Horace insisted all property ought to be equally divided, not one of them was willing to bring his theory to practice, so far as to defray the expenses of his friend and family to Europe, though with one accord they swore John Hammond could do no less than convey the whole tribe free of charge.

Horace thought so too, but had not yet found assurance enough to say it. Some former transactions, and the assistance received from him during the last several years — assistance amounting nearly to the support of his family, held him silent. Beside the two adopted by his sister and Agnes Courtland, Horace had eight children to take with him, and *Lady Fitzallen* already began to talk of a

retinue of servants ; though the roof that covered her and the bread she eat was the dole of charity. Some weeks passed on, and Horace was distracted between the earnest desire he felt to be at home and the impossibility of getting there, when, for the first time for many years, the saintly composed figure of Mary Penn met his view ; a visit so unexpected, and so unwished for, benumbed, for a few minutes, every faculty of Horace and Matilda, who happened both to be at home.

Mrs. Penn had been for some years a widow : her children were all happily settled, and herself in affluent circumstances. Withdrawn from the turmoils of busy life, she literally went about doing good from house to house — her presence shed the balm of consolation and chased the spectres, poverty and distress. She had long been the secret benefactress of Matilda's helpless children, and her present visit was made with a view to such

advice and instruction as she should be enabled to give with the hope of future good, and to give what assistance should appear advisable to send them hence. Mrs. Penn entered on the subject with impressive solemnity, striving to awaken in the minds of her hearers feelings of compunction and a sense of the danger in which they stood. Her sitting was long, and deluged the faces of Matilda and her children in tears — even Horace felt too much respect and awe to dare disturb or interrupt her.

Having finished what she would say on this most important subject, and distributed some little books, on a promise they should be carefully perused, the pious matron turned to Horace, saying more cheerfully, “There is another business in which I believe thou needest assistance, and in which I would fain be useful to thee. Thou art, I believe, fully aware that thy paternal inheritance is fallen into other hands, and that nothing

at present remains for thee in Ireland; however, from all accounts, I do believe it thy duty to return to thy native country, and honestly endeavour to recover part of that property once thy father's. To do this thou needest money — now if thou choosest to go by the ship I shall fix on, I will pay the passage of thyself, thy wife, and eight children."

"But," interrupted Matilda, "there are the two others. I should like to have all my children with me, and I must have a servant or two, you know."

"I know no such thing, Matilda. I know that thou goest without the two of thy children happily cared for by friends, and without servants, or else thou goest without my assistance: what hast thou to do with servants, who canst not support thy children, or procure with them the common necessities of life but by charity?"

Without permitting his wife again to speak, Horace gladly accepted Mrs. Penn's

generous offer, and ridiculed the idea of burdening himself with *brats* or servants, declaring he should be happy to leave half his remaining progeny behind him, if any body would be plagued with them.

Mrs. Penn took the opportunity of enforcing on him the duties of a father and husband in a few impressive words before she left them, promising to procure a passage, and let them know when the ship would be ready. Horace swore as she left the house the old girl had done a good thing that morning. He always thought she had more common sense than the whole family; beside, if she would pay him so well for her sermons, he would not mind hearing one from her every day they continued; though to be sure she had promised nothing, considering they cheated him out of a share in the house and used him infamously; in common justice he was entitled to a good

round sum from them, and so he would let them know yet.

Matilda joined in invectives against her benefactress, protesting she owed all her many difficulties to the cruelty and stiffness of the Penns.

This produced reflections on her own folly and extravagance from Horace — reflections produced recrimination, and word followed word, until, as usual, they parted, only regretting they had ever met.

Matilda's preparations were not difficult to make: her scanty wardrobe was soon prepared; and the children's still more spare habiliments, replenished by the Courtlands and Emma, needed nothing from their mother, who frequently regretted that their first appearance "*on their own estate,*" and before "*their uncle the earl,*" would not be more grand and imposing.

At last intimation was received from Mary Penn of what ship they were to sail

in, and the day it was expected to sail. The intimation was accompanied by a short but excellent letter to Matilda, enclosing an order for twenty pounds on Charles Penn, and desiring it might be appropriated to the support of her children until something should be obtained from the estate.

The day arrived that was to take Matilda from her native land, with a husband for whom she felt little regard and no respect, and who did not even profess the slightest shade of either for her and eight neglected, rebellious, unruly children ; she embarked on the deceitful bosom of the ocean, to seek in other climes that comfort she had never known, but by report, on her native continent.

As Philadelphia lessened to the view of Horace, reflection stole over his mind : — he had landed there eighteen years since, flushed with hope and intoxicated with the prospect of liberty and the prin-

ciples of republicanism — the future then offered a bright perspective, and the present plenty and pleasure. Alas! in what manner had his hopes been realised? — what had the future really produced? — what had the perspective proved? — but little more than varied misery. How sadly was he changed, how sunk and depraved: who, in the thin swarthy, haggard-looking republican, surrounded by a sickly, fretful wife, and a disorderly, disreputable-looking, ill-speaking family of children, with only common necessities of the coarsest kind to cover them, would recognise the handsome, spirited, dashing Horace Fitzallen, or (as his eyes turned on the drooping Matilda) the elegant Matilda St. Aubin — and why is it? The question aroused a long-sleeping monitor, but thus aroused, conscience replied in faithful unvarnished terms, and told a tale that deprived her auditor of all inclination to sleep that night, and gave birth to some feeble resolves of amend-

ment. But day after day passed on, conscience daily got a lullaby in her old cradle of infidelity, and the difficulties at the very outset of a new road, magnified the longer they were looked at, until sickened or frightened at the view, Horace pursued the old course, carefully avoiding to arouse his sleeping enemy from her dormant state. Among the passengers were two or three with whom Horace could abuse the situation of things, the faults in America's *all-perfect* government, and the very system of nature itself; and with those he spent his time, until confinement, want of amusement, and some occasional pinchings from conscience, made his temper naturally violent, and by time and indulgence become tyrannical and morose — the terror and hatred of every creature on board.

The sight of land at last restored cheerfulness. Matilda again began to build castles in the air, and her husband to curse her folly and command silence.

The order on Charles Penn, for twenty pounds, which she possessed, Matilda had prudence enough to conceal until the day of trouble — a day she justly feared that would come too soon.

Horace found his old enemy O'Neil still living the veriest miser that existed, denying himself every thing beyond what was absolutely necessary to keep him alive, proving not only the love of life but the love of gold to increase with years: his was that miserable passion which could only enjoy by hoarding, by adding house to house, and barn to barn, guinea to guinea, and heap to heap, merely to write on them "*all this is mine;*" while in the indulgence of this sordid avarice he was more miserably poor than the wretched outcast who in vain solicited at his door the scanty boon of chilling charity. From him Horace could obtain neither information nor money; he insisted that Fitzallen was his own, doubly paid for, and said Lord Dunmore had

tried all that could be done to deprive him of it, but in vain ; he cared nothing about entail, and defied Horace to his utmost.

Many were the meetings, many the quarrels between the aged miser and the spendthrift baronet, with but little advantage on either side. Meanwhile Matilda experienced all the miseries of hopeless poverty : for two years she lived almost from the bounty of Lady Dunmore. By great exertions a small annuity had been obtained from O'Neil ; but this Horace appropriated to himself, leaving his family to subsist as they could ; and often, very often during this period, they must have felt absolute want but for the liberality of friends, among whom was the Earl of Glenmuir.

A very few letters passed between the earl and Horace immediately after the latter returned to Ireland ; but the earl was, in every sense of the word, a gentleman ; strongly attached to the laws

and constitution of England, and though a Scotchman and born of Presbyterian parents, devoted to the reigning family, and a warm supporter of the Episcopal Church ; a man of unblemished honour, strict integrity, and, according to his own reading, pure morality ; a despiser and contemner of infidelity, under whatever specious mask it appeared ; a fond father and most affectionate husband.

Between such a character and Sir Horace there was no thought or feeling in common, and the earl soon felt an aversion for his nephew bordering on abhorrence, and but little better for Matilda, who he considered weak, unstable, and unchristian (an unpardonable offence in a female) ; but could not bear they should die of want, or even feel it, if possible to be prevented ; he therefore sent Matilda and the children frequent small supplies, but forbore to notice Horace.

Mrs. Escott too felt it a duty to aid them all in her power, and would have taken one of the girls to educate, but Lady Dunmore sent her such a melancholy account of their want of principle and every sense of propriety, that justice to her own family forbid the idea being put in practice.

Often after Lady Fitzallen came to Europe did she regret her American cottage, and often was she grateful for a small quantity of meal or potatoes, or a bundle of cast-off clothes to cover her children, while Sir Horace lived at lodgings in Cork, with some kind and fickle fair one.

At the end of two years after their arrival, the wretched old O'Neil expired on a bed of straw, and leaving no near relations, his children being both dead, the heir-at-law, a man of very different disposition, took possession of the property. To him Horace made immediate application respecting the Fitzallen es-

tate, offering to lay the matter, with all the papers that could be collected from O'Neil's accounts, and the deeds of the estate, before any eminent counsel he might name, or to take the decision of those chosen by the opposite parties and a disinterested friend. To this Mr. Megan offered no objection, observing he had no desire but for justice, and should not feel easy with property on which another could even fancy a claim. After much delay, and many vexatious disappointments, the estate was at last declared to be the unalienable property of the representative of the Fitzallen family; still the glorious uncertainty of the law held it in "bondage vile," until the claims on it could be ascertained; but a provision for the family was appointed from the rents, and Matilda again looked forward to affluence and fashion; but her family, stubborn, undutiful, and rebellious, feared not God, nor regarded man.

Young as they still were, the two eldest girls, both of whom were unfortunately handsome, already formed connections, and entered into amours, that alarmed their friends with fears of a dreadful kind, and served as a subject of tears to their broken-hearted mother, and of execration to their "*liberal*" father. The younger ones offered no better promise of excellence; and the sailor, from whom accounts were occasionally received, appeared to be the only one of Matilda's rearing, that would pursue either an honest or respectable employ unless a wonderful change took place in them. The provision made from Fitzallen was such as placed Matilda and her family beyond the fear of want; but being vested in the hands of trustees, was gall and bitterness to Sir Horace, who daily made his unfortunate wife bitterly feel how much more severe is unkindness than misfortune.

"How is it," asked Lady Dunmore,

on entering the house one day, and surprising Matilda in tears, "that I so frequently find you weeping? surely you have now cause for gratitude and joy; yet the same face of sorrow always salutes my eyes; do, pray, explain it."

"It is easily done," replied Matilda, "my sorrows arise from a source nearer my heart than that of want even, namely, the cruelty of my husband, and the ingratitude of my children, and from griefs such as these there is no appeal, they are incurable."

"I am not quite sure of that," returned Lady Dunmore, "have you ever set yourself seriously to cure them with patience and perseverance, beginning at the root of the evil?"

"Indeed, Lady Dunmore, in the time you have known me, I think you have witnessed my patience, and need not doubt my perseverance or efforts to cure an evil so intolerable; but it is not very easy to begin at the root of the matter,

seeing that was my unfortunate marriage ; though if you mean by divorce, I should be but too happy in acceding to such a thing, if Sir Horace would agree to it."

" But I do not think of divorce, Lady Fitzallen : you married your husband the character he now is with your eyes open, therefore can scarcely be allowed the right of complaint, for ' that which ye sow shall ye not reap ? ' But the root of the matter is deeper than your marriage, which was produced from it—it lies in an evil heart of unbelief, an heart prone to wickedness, and which still remains unconverted by misfortune, untaught by grace. Now the evil you complain of can admit of cure only by removing the cause. Your children, Matilda, have never been taught their duty to God or to their parents. You have talked of liberty, and demanded blind submission : this inconsistency could not fail to make a deep impression on your

children's minds, and weaken your authority, which, unsupported by good example, or the fear of God before their eyes, sunk for want of foundation."

"But admitting what you say to be true, Lady Dunmore, and some of it certainly is so, how is it now to be remedied? where am I now to seek a cure?"

"In the sure mercies of your heavenly Father, by deep repentance and a close study of the Holy Scriptures; though you cannot give yourself that repentance which worketh peace; yet make the words of inspiration your study; pray for assistance and instruction, and shape the line of your conduct agreeably to its dictates, and doubt not but all things shall be given that makes for your everlasting peace."

"I dare say you are very right, Lady Dunmore, but I do not understand those things; and were I to attempt what you advise, consider the difficulties I should bring upon myself by acting contrary to

the principles of Sir Horace ; indeed I have not courage.”

“ Yet you have courage to live in open rebellion against your Maker and Judge, to dare his denunciations, to break his laws, and despise his commands — you have courage to encounter an angry husband, disobedient children, and the scorn or contemptuous pity of the world. Arouse yourself, Matilda, from this mental sloth ; see the verge on which you stand ; look back on the distresses you have passed, forward to the gloomy prospect that lies before you ; and while yet you have opportunity, fly to the refuge offered, strive earnestly to find a panacea for all your woes, in the consoling reflection that if your portion here be toil and care, and your days full of evil, they are but few ; and to those who improve the ills of life, a full recompense is sure in that world, where care and sorrow can find no entrance : your life shall then become easy, your conduct

praiseworthy, and the example you offer your children such as they must respect, and doubt it not, such as in time they will, from feeling its beneficial effects, strive to imitate, until your house and hearts become the blest abodes of peace."

"Ah!" returned Matilda, bitterly weeping, "such is your heart and house, and such might have been mine, had I followed the advice of Agnes Courtland and her brother, and not married an infidel: but it is now too late, I have only to bear my load of trouble as I can a few years longer, and then end it by everlasting sleep."

"Away, away with this delusion, Matilda, *'you shall not sleep, but awake to joy or endless woe ;'* death is not annihilation, your body only dies, your spirit shall live for ever; neither hope, believe, nor fear the contrary, since nothing is more certain. But, Matilda, have you never read the Bible, if it be but for curiosity?"

“Never: I have not much time for reading, and any amusing light work suits me better than a book. I do not understand, and have always heard doubted: indeed, we never had one in the house, until you gave Selina one, and I don’t know what is become of that.”

Selina at that moment coming into the room, Lady Dunmore enquired what use she had made of her Bible.

“Not much, indeed,” promptly replied the child, “for when I began to read it, such a hubbub as Bessy and Margaret set up nobody ever heard; then came my father, ranting and swearing that it was unbecoming in a Baronet’s daughter to read such nonsense. A Baronet, indeed! I wonder what they would say to his *Sirship* in America, or how much the better he is for tacking it to his name, or painting it on the front of his new cart, since he is turned farmer.”

“Silence,” said Lady Dunmore,

“ this is a very improper way to speak of your father : he may have faults, but the relation he stands in to you, should teach you to respect his virtues and be silent on his failings.”

“ I would rather believe you, Lady Dunmore, than any one else ; but I have often heard my father say the very opposite ; I heartily wish my father was a good man, a Christian I believe you call it, such a man as your game-keeper. I would rather be his daughter than the greatest lord’s in the land, except Lord Dunmore. I am not given to flatter any one, and dare say in Europe I am a very rude girl, but I love good people for all that, though I never saw many of them, and would rather clean Lord Dunmore’s shoes than ride in a carriage with my father.”

“ What makes you love good people, Selina ?” asked Lady Dunmore.

“ Because they are happy, do not quarrel and call each other ill names,

and appear contented in their situation, like your game-keeper, who says he does not want any thing in the world, yet, you know, he is not a gentleman; then they love each other, and I should like to be loved, aye and to love others too, but nobody cares about me, so my best way is to care about nobody."

"No, Selina, my child, that is not your best way; you must love God, and love your parents, particularly your kind mother, and your brothers and sisters: they will then all love you, and you may all become very happy by striving to be so."

"Perhaps, Lady Dunmore, if I were to serve him, God might love me, but for all the rest, it is, I believe, hopeless."

"Do you think if you were with a very good woman, and six or eight other young people, you could love them and be obedient to their rules, so as to get your mind improved and be happy; in a school I mean, or something like it."

“ With a *very good woman* I could do any thing, or be any thing ; but not with such a woman as the governess my sisters had in Philadelphia.”

Lady Dunmore satisfied her the governess should be very different, and then dismissed her.

A humble friend of Lady Dunmore, a truly good and valuable woman, kept a school for a select number of respectable girls, and Lady Dunmore, on conversing with poor Selina, immediately formed the resolution of placing her with her friend for some years, if her parents would consent ; and communicated her proposal to Matilda, who demurred a little, because Selina was the most useful of her tribe ; but in the end all objections were removed, and Selina became the pupil of a plain, affectionate, Christian teacher, and under her tuition became what she wished, *loving and beloved*. She remained with her some years, and left her only to become the

wife of a young clergyman, to whom Lord Dunmore had just presented a valuable living, in which situation she still conducts herself with propriety, proving that she really has chosen the ways of wisdom as her ways.

CHAP. XII.

THE many conversations Isabel held with her uncle on the subject of religion sunk deep in his mind ; leading him to examine the causes that could determine a widow, in delicate health and constrained circumstances, to decide on pursuing an employ in every respect repulsive to her taste, habits, and feelings ; laborious, arduous, and that scarcely supplied a respectable maintenance, in preference to the participation of every comfort, ease, and luxury, the world could afford ; and what was of still more weight, the handsome provision of a family for whom her maternal heart was constantly pained, and a son whose future welfare hung particularly heavy on her spirits.

The result of this consideration was, that such a decision could only be the result of fixed principles; and principle in a woman of Isabel's strong mind, clear enquiry, and varied experience, would not be formed on false premises; —her deductions might be depended on, her opinions trusted. And, after all, what was the gay world to him? He had tasted its [pleasures — drank deep of its sorrows: and should he now throw from him an affectionate, sensible, charming family circle, because its excellent head was a Christian, and would not barter conscience for wealth? Surely he ought rather to copy her example, and endeavour to become the same decided character.

In consequence of these cogitations, Isabel was surprised by a visit from the earl in a month after he had left W—. Many were the conversations that took place between Isabel and her uncle, and the few friends whose judgment she valued;

and much she hesitated and doubted the propriety of resigning labour for ease, honest industry for dependence, even on so near a friend. But the matter was at last determined, and Isabel took possession of a splendid mansion, beautifully situated in the immediate neighbourhood of W—, which the earl purchased in compliment to his niece's taste and desire of remaining there, just eight years after she had been stript of husband, home, and fortune ; a long space, when counted by

The slow-falling sands of sorrow-marked time.

But with Isabel it had been a period so variously fraught with joy and woe, so fully occupied, and so deeply interesting, that no period of her life afforded more consolation in the reflection, or excited stronger feelings of pure gratitude.

Among those who rejoiced in the change of Isabel's situation, none did so more thoroughly, more sincerely, or more

unostentatiously, than her faithful servant, friend, and teacher, Kitty Hunter; nor were the good farmer's family behind in every demonstration of respect and pleasure.

Now again Isabel's chief care was her children; — she was their friend, companion, and kind instructress; the participator of their pleasures, the sharer of their sorrows; the possessor of their fullest confidence, their guide and adviser through the difficult paths of youth.

In the earl Isabel found a friend, — her children a father. Soon after they were settled at Willow Bank, the name of their new abode, Lord Glenmuir presented his niece with a deed, by which he rendered her and her children perfectly independent; enabling her to choose her own residence, and quit him at any time.

Such generosity but bound Isabel more firmly to his interests; and the earl had daily cause to be grateful to

that Divine hand which directed his steps to the humble abode of his inestimable and beloved niece.

Clara, the favourite and almost idol of her uncle, was still the same impetuous, volatile, unsettled Clara, occasionally loving and occasionally hating the world—the life of every society and the delight of every company. Eminently beautiful, but delicate even to fragility, the life and fire of her countenance, the play of her conversation, and unbounded vivacity, appeared almost supernatural, and acted like enchantment. — Admired, flattered, courted, and followed, Clara, like a gay little pinnace, danced on the smooth bosom of the lake, delighting every beholder, but filling the bosom of its owner with fears for its fate in a rough sea or swelling storm. She was the child of many prayers, and Isabel strove to believe all would be well; but the Christian mother's heart would sometimes tremble

when her beautiful girl flew delighted to a gay party, a ball, or any other enjoyment of the kind ; from which she usually returned exhausted, dejected, and worn out.

At such times Isabel's eyes 'would fill with tears. " Yet why," she would say, " these tears ? My child is too well instructed long to follow after vanities, or greedily drink in the world ; the novelty will soon wear off, and with it the desire of pleasure. Some kind of trial is necessary, and this is now my only one ; — no, not so, my brother is a far greater : — and who, Isabel, awoke thee to better things ? Who but He who can restrain the passions of inexperienced youth, and change the heart of rebellious age, — who can restrain the whirlwind and stop the swelling tide."

It was at this period that Isabel wrote for one of her brother's children, but the opinion Lady Dunmore, who did not then know the good she afterwards dis-

covered in Selina, gave of their principles, forbade their introduction into her own pure-minded family, and equally so into any seminary ; she was therefore constrained to leave them with their mother.

At a ball given by a gentleman in the neighbourhood, where Isabel's two eldest girls, accompanied by their uncle, were the reigning *belles* of the evening, Clara danced too much, regardless of the many gentle hints given by her more collected and prudent sister. Cecilia in alarm sought her uncle, but the earl enjoyed the graceful movements of her fairy figure too much to hastily interrupt her, until at the end of a fatiguing dance, which she had accomplished with spirit and alacrity, he saw her suddenly turn pale ; flying towards her, he caught her in his arms, and bore her towards the open window : but it was soon discovered that some internal complaint had seized her. On her return home,

Isabel received the half-dying girl in her arms, and mentally breathed a prayer that this potion might be found sufficiently strong to work its salutary effects, and produce a nausea and weaning from the world of even country pleasures. Medical attendance was called in, and the rupture of a small blood-vessel pronounced to be her complaint. With Clara's delicate constitution, this sounded like her death-knell.

Clara heard it with composure, though she told her mother a curtain had now fallen between her and life, that shut out the prospect of lengthened days, and left her nothing to do, but prepare for a state of future existence.

Nothing could exceed the grief or kindness of Lord Glenmuir during the long illness that followed : all that care, that medicine, that physicians, or expense could do, was done for the lovely invalid, who sometimes offered faint

hopes of recovery, but quickly relapsed into more than usual weakness.

It was now that Isabel's deeply-seated piety, firm mind, and strong hold on everlasting truths, shone conspicuously : that devotion to her children, that had formed so striking a feature in her character, and appeared blended with her every thought and feeling, did not now disappear ; but it was so moulded into submission to the Divine will, so sublimated by hope and faith, so softened by resigned confidence, that instead of the turbulent, overpowering feeling we have formerly seen, it was the Divinely calm sustaining aspiration of the self-denying, self-abused Christian. " Not my will, but Thine be done," was written in legible characters on her pale hope-inspired countenance. She was the consoler of her uncle, the monitress and support of Cecilia and Eliza, the judicious, maternal correspondent of her beloved George ; and the spiritual guide

and friend, the tender nurse, and constant unwearied attendant, of her drooping, darling Clara. No tears, no sighs escaped the pious mother, a solemn acquiescence with the all-wise decrees filled her soul, and regulated her conduct. From the first, Clara was perfectly sensible of her danger; some natural feelings of regret arose at being so early cut off from life, and its opening prospects of happiness; but they were transient, soon passed away, and returned no more. Soon she learnt to consider it as an escape from danger and temptation, and contemplated the approaching scene with feelings of perfect resignation, not unmixed with gratitude.

“ I feel,” said she to her sisters, “ as if more highly favoured than either of you, in being thus early snatched from the allurements that would probably have led my unsteady feet into the mazy path of error, perhaps beyond the power of recall. I shall now step out

of it, and quietly shelter my little bark in the haven of eternal rest. Nay, weep not, my sweet Cecilia; indeed you should all rejoice at my early flight, my happy escape from care and toil: you, dear girls, are both better calculated to be my beloved mother's friends and comforters; emulate her conduct, be but worthy of your mother, and you will be what your poor unstable Clara never was. Oh! with all my faults, to be thus favoured; add your grateful praises to mine, and never, never let a thought approaching to complaint or murmur cross your minds."

Exhausted with talking, Clara fell asleep, from which she awoke with an increase of every bad symptom. From this day she grew rapidly weaker, was no longer able to speak, or scarcely lift a finger. Isabel hovered round her, whispered the words of comfort, breathed the prayer of maternal anguish, subdued by a hope beyond mortality, strengthened

her faith, and pointed her views to realms of endless bliss. Deeply engaged in these pious offices, Isabel heard an approaching footstep, without raising her eyes to notice who approached; soon after, a stifled convulsive sob, and quick retiring step, excited her attention; a figure in a travelling dress passed hastily into the dressing-room, and buried its face on the neck of Cecilia. Isabel's heart fluttered as she followed, and laid her hand on the shoulder of the stranger, who raising her head, discovered the dear and well-remembered features of Mrs. Delville. For a few minutes the friends were locked in each others arms without speaking; a deep sigh restored speech to Isabel.

“Welcome, thrice welcome, dearest, best of earthly friends,” murmured she, “ever present in the day of severe trial, ever near to sustain my drooping hands, to whisper peace to my agitated spirit.”

“I am not alone,” said Eliza, after a

few moments given to mutual congratulation, "an old and true friend waits you below, dear Isabel."

"Not even for him," replied Isabel, "can I leave this apartment, until my child is entered into rest; but this house, this room, this heart, is open to him: bid him immediately come up, bid him come and bless my darling ere she dies."

The meeting between Colonel Delville and Isabel was serious and affecting; much had happened to both since last they parted, time had likewise laid its hand on the trio; but the same friendship, the same affection, still warmed each heart, and animated every sentiment. Isabel insisted on the Colonel and his family taking up their abode with her.

"Never," said she, "have I needed your presence more, never loved you better; stay and help me to improve this visitation to my dear uncle, my children, and myself."

The next day, as Mrs. Delville and

her afflicted friend were silently watching the apparently dying and insensible Clara, she suddenly opened her eyes; a beam of pleasure crossed her face, as making an effort to move she held out a hand to each, sweetly smiling. Mrs. Delville eagerly enquired if she remembered her; a faint "yes, and Ellen," escaped her lips, accompanied by an anxious look towards the door. Ellen was immediately at the bed-side. Isabel raised the lovely shade in her arms, as Ellen leant forward to kiss her forehead. "Forgive me, Ellen, I love you now," said she. Ellen's streaming tears were an eloquent reply: pressing their hands to her lips, she drew them together, raised her eyes to Heaven, softly uttered, "bless, oh bless them;" turned on her mother a radiant smile, then closing her eyes, lay back on that dear maternal bosom, and expired without a sigh.

No sooner was Isabel convinced that

the vital spark had fled, than sinking on her knees, she exclaimed aloud, "All hail, my darling, I give thee joy; thy course is early finished, thy warfare quickly done, and thou art entered into thy Father's kingdom."

But this excitation soon subsided, and Isabel felt her loss with all a mother's feelings, though without repining, or despair. The stroke was severe, the potion bitter; but Isabel had drank deeply of the same cup, and felt its beneficial effects — had bent under the same chastening hand, and rose improved. To the earl it was an afflictive blow; but, supported by the good Mr. Wilkins and the Colonel, he sunk not under it, and a few months served, in some degree, to reconcile him to the trying dispensation. And here Isabel's trouble may be said to close: she had fought a dreadful warfare, nobly sustained the conflict, come off more than conqueror.

Going out from the fire of affliction, she shone resplendently, but mildly. To her uncle, who lived several years, she was all that daughter, friend, and Christian could be, assisting him to discover that light which gilded his declining years, and made his latter days his best. To her children, words cannot describe what she was; suffice it to say, her labour of love was not in vain, their excellence and well-doing amply repaid her every care.

Colonel Delville, having suffered much in the East from wounds and fatigue, retired from the service on his return to Europe, and settled with his family within a short distance of Isabel, proving to his godson a valuable well-informed friend and counsellor, and to the neighbourhood in general a benefactor, companion, and assistant.

On the death of the Earl of Glenmuir, his title and hereditary estate were claimed by a young man, declaring him-

self the son of a brother older than Lady Isabella. With some little trouble, but without opposition, he proved his title by the laws of Scotland, though an illegitimate son ; his father having, before witnesses, declared him his son and heir. Unfortunately he had nothing to leave ; but the young man, though filling some inferior station, forgot not who he was, and on the death of the earl being announced in the public papers, formally laid claim to the family honours, and by so doing, saved a son of Sir Horace Fitzallen's the trouble.

George Escott, prouder of that name than of any other title in Europe, now followed the first desire of his heart, and entered the church of England, in whose service he continued a faithful, useful minister, until recognised by his father's family, and called as Lord Bayworth into a more extensive, and we trust more useful sphere of life, in which he now shines an ornament and example.

At seventeen, Cecilia married the son of a family as conspicuous for its virtues as for its high rank and unspotted name. Though young, her principles and judgment were matured — her *decision* in favour of religion determinately made; and, as her conduct daily proves, not made in her own strength. Eliza is the happy wife of Captain Delville, a son in every respect worthy the parents who gave him birth, — a higher panegyric it were needless to give.

Sir Horace Fitzallen, after some time, became the undisputed possessor of his patrimonial estate; but change of clime and intemperance had ruined a constitution once remarkably good, and he lived not long to enjoy this ultimatum of his wishes. Isabel spent some weeks with him before his death, and spared neither labour nor prayers for the improvement of his soul and body. For the latter her pious efforts were useless, for the former we have no means of judging,

but may charitably *hope*. Nothing could prevail on Sir Horace to make a will; of course, wife and younger children were once more unprovided for, and Sir William, who still resided with John Hammond, was summoned as heir-at-law. Reluctantly he obeyed the summons, for William had imbibed the principles of true Christianity, and the warmest gratitude and affection for his uncle and aunt, and with them had hoped to spend his life; but duty called him to Ireland, and to its calls William was never deaf.

Irritated by what they considered cruel neglect, the two eldest daughters of Sir Horace, soon after his death, deaf to all the advice and kindness of their munificent aunt, became the wives, the one of her father's footman, the other of a dissolute young man, as destitute of principle as of fortune, thus finally closing in with vice and misery at the very instant that the prospect of permanent respectability was opening to their view.

Of Matilda's large family, not one that was brought up under her own eye became either a religious or respectable character. Her second son, Horace, who by judicious management might have been an ornament to society, and a blessing to his family, after serving some years of cruel hardships in his country's service, fell, just at the period when promotion and honour lay before him.

To the three children who were taken from her, Matilda owes the blessings of ease and competence. In Sir William she finds what she never experienced from her husband, an indulgent, kind, *truly liberal* and Christian friend, not blind to her feelings and want of decision ; but anxious to correct them, by tenderly pointing them out, and offering the means of a cure in that Gospel, whose streams are healing, and extend to every evil. To the two younger children he is an affectionate father ; and since modern philosophy, equality, sovereignty of the people, reason tri-

umphant over revelation, and infidelity in every shape and form, are forbidden an entrance into his peaceful mansion, where the simply-beautiful and Divine precepts of the Christian religion, as taught by its holy founder, are made the rule of conduct and standard of excellence; we may rationally hope they will, so taught, give a better proof of a good foundation being laid, whereon to raise a superstructure, than did their father or his pupils of “*liberality and reason.*”

“Thus far,” said Isabel, on her return from Ireland; “thus far, dear Eliza, hath the hand of Omnipotence guided me; and now what wait I for, but the mandate that shall say, ‘come up hither to join thy kindred in the skies;’ but in the mean time I have a labour to perform, to clothe the naked, to feed the hungry, to supply the poor and needy, to visit the sick, and comfort the afflicted and distressed. To this parish in particular I am indebted; here I

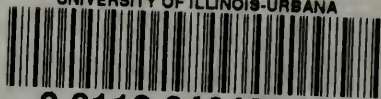
came a houseless wanderer, they took me in, enabled me usefully, though humbly, to support my children, and to them shall the debt of gratitude be repaid, while I praise the chastening hand that, through deep affliction, led me to see the errors of false philosophy; and amid the wreck of all apparent happiness, make the truths of revealed religion my firm, unalterable decision."

Loved, revered, and lamented Isabel, closed her earthly career in peace, not long since.

The death-bed of the just is yet undrawn
By mortal hand; —
Angels should paint it — angels for ever there;
There, on a post of honour and of joy.

THE END.

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